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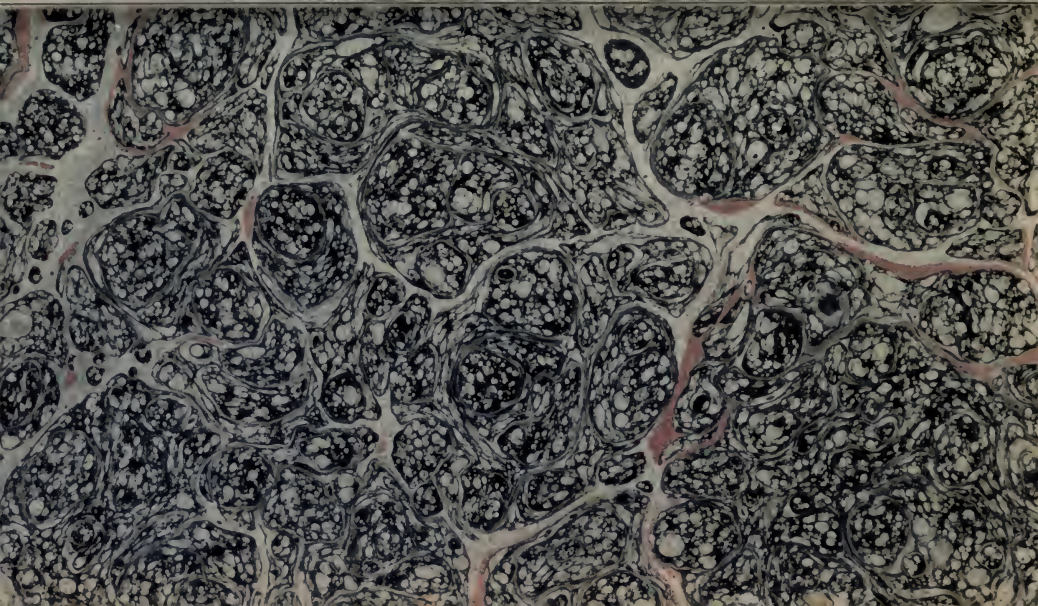

THE

MODERN THEATRE;

A COLLECTION OF

SUCCESSFUL MODERN PLAYS,

AS ACTED AT

THE THEATRES ROYAL, LONDON.

PRINTED FROM THE PROMPT BOOKS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS.

SELECTED BY

MRS INCHBALD.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. VIII.

MATILDA. FUGITIVE.
MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS. HE WOU'D BE A SOLDIER.
ENGLAND PRESERVED.

LONDON:
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EDINBURGH:
Printed by John Brown.

MATILDA;

A

TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF THE EARL OF WARWICK.

[Thomas Francklin

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MORCAR,	*Mr Reddish.*
EDWIN,	*Mr Smith.*
SIWARD,	*Mr Palmer.*
OFFICERS, *&c.*	
MATILDA,	*Miss Younge.*
BERTHA,	*Miss Platt.*

SCENE,—*Morcar's Camp, and the Environs near Nottingham.*

MATILDA.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

MATILDA'S *Tent, with a view of the distant country.*

Enter MATILDA *and* BERTHA.

Mat. I thank thee, gentle Bertha, for thy goodness;
If aught could sooth the anguish of my soul,
Or raise it from the horrors of despair
To hope and joy, 'twould be thy gen'rous friendship:
But I am sunk so deep in misery,
That comfort cannot reach me.
Ber. Talk not thus,
My sweet Matilda; innocence, like thine,
Must be the care of all-directing heav'n.
Already hath the interposing hand

Of providence redeem'd thee from the rage
Of savage war, and shelter'd thee within
This calm asylum. Mercia's potent Earl,
The noble Morcar, will protect thy virtues;
And, if I err not, wishes but to share
His conquests with thee.

Mat. O my friend, ofttimes
The flow'ry path that tempts our wand'ring steps
But leads to misery; what thou fondly deem'st
My soul's best comfort, is its bitterest woe.
Earl Morcar loves me. To the generous mind
The heaviest debt is that of gratitude,
When 'tis not in our power to repay it.

Ber. Oft have I heard thee say, to him thou ow'st
Thy honour and thy life.

Mat. I told thee truth.
Beneath my father's hospitable roof,
I spent my earlier, happier days, in peace
And safety: when the Norman conq'ror came,
Discord, thou know'st, soon lit her fatal torch,
And spread destruction o'er this wretched land.
The loyal Ranulph flew to William's aid,
And left me to a faithful peasant's care,
Who liv'd, sequester'd, in the fertile plains
Of rich Northumbria: There awhile I dwelt
In sweet retirement, when the savage Malcolm
Rush'd on our borders.

Ber. I remember well
The melancholy hour. Confusion rag'd
On ev'ry side, and desolation spread
Its terrors round us. How didst thou escape?

Mat. A crew of desperate ruffians seiz'd upon me,
A helpless prey: For, O! he was not there,
Who best could have defended his Matilda.
Then had I fall'n a wretched sacrifice
To brutal rage, and lawless violence,
Had not the generous Morcar interposed

To save me: Though he joined the guilty cause
Of foul rebellion, yet his soul abhorr'd
Such violation. At his awful voice
The surly ruffians left me, and retired.
He bore me, half expiring, in his arms,
Back to his tent; with ev'ry kind attention
There strove to sooth my griefs, and promis'd, soon
As fit occasion offer'd, to restore me
To my afflicted father.

Ber. Something sure
Was due to generous Morcar for his aid,
So timely given.

Mat. No doubt: But mark what follow'd.
In my deliverer too soon I found
An ardent lover sighing at my feet.

Ber. And what is there the proudest of our sex
Could wish for more? To be the envied bride
Of noble Morcar, first of England's peers
In fame and fortune.

Mat. Never trust, my Bertha,
To outward show. 'Tis not the smiles of fortune,
The pomp of wealth, or splendour of a court,
Can make us happy. In the mind alone,
Rests solid joy, and true felicity,
Which I can never taste: For, O my friend!
A secret sorrow weighs upon my heart.

Ber. Then pour it in the bosom of thy friend:
Let me partake it with thee.

Mat. Generous maid!
Know then, for nought will I conceal from thee,
I honour Mercia's Earl, revere his virtues,
And wish I could repay him with myself;
But, blushing, I acknowledge it, the heart
His vows solicit, is not mine to give.

Ber. Has then some happier youth——

Mat. Another time
I'll tell thee all the story of our loves.

But, O my Bertha! didst thou know to whom
My virgin faith is plighted, thou wouldst say,
I am indeed unhappy.

Ber. Could Matilda
Bestow the treasure of her heart on one
Unworthy of her choice?

Mat. Unworthy! No.
I glory in my passion for the best,
The loveliest of his sex. O! he was all
That bounteous nature, prodigal of charms,
Did on her choicest fav'rite e'er bestow.
His graceful form and sweet deportment spoke
The fairer beauties of his kindred soul,
Where ev'ry grace and ev'ry virtue shone.
But thou wilt tremble, Bertha, when I tell thee,
He is Earl Morcar's —— brother.

Ber. Ha! his brother!
The noble Edwin! Often have I heard
My father——

Mat. Did Lord Edrick know him then?

Ber. He knew his virtues, and his fame in arms,
And often would lament the dire effects
Of civil discord, that could thus dissolve
The ties of nature, and of brethren make
The bitt'rest foes. If right I learn, Lord Edwin
Is William's firmest friend, and still supports
His royal master.

Mat. Yes, my Bertha, there
I still find comfort: Edwin ne'er was stain'd,
As Morcar is, with foul disloyalty,
But stands betwixt his sov'reign and the rage
Of rebel multitudes, to guard his throne.
If nobly fighting in his country's cause,
My hero falls, I shall not weep alone;
The king he lov'd and honour'd will lament him,
And grateful England mix her tears with mine.

Ber. And doth Earl Morcar know of Edwin's love?

Mat. O, no! I would not for a thousand worlds
He should suspect it, lest his fiery soul
Should catch th' alarm, and kindle to a flame
That might destroy us all.

Ber. I know his warmth
And vehemence of temper, unrestrain'd
By laws, and spurning at the royal pow'r
Which he contemns, he rules despotic here.

Mat. Alas! how man from man, and brother oft
From brother differs! Edwin's tender passion
Is soft and gentle as the balmy breath
Of vernal zephyrs; whilst the savage north,
That curls the angry ocean into storms,
Is a faint image of Earl Morcar's love:
'Tis rage, 'tis fury all. When last we met,
He knit his angry brow, and frown'd severe
Upon me; then, with wild distracted look,
Bade me beware of trifling with his passion,
He would not brook it—trembling I retir'd,
And bath'd my couch in tears.

Ber. Unhappy maid!
But time, that softens ev'ry human woe,
Will bring some blest event, and lighten thine.

Mat. Alas! thou know'st not what it is to love.
Haply thy tender heart hath never felt
The tortures of that soul-bewitching passion.
Its joys are sweet and poignant, but its pangs
Are exquisite, as I have known too well:
For, O! my Bertha, since the fatal hour
When Edwin left me, never hath sweet peace,
That us'd to dwell with all its comforts here,
E'er deign'd to visit this afflicted breast.

Ber. Too plain, alas! I read thy sorrows; grief
Sits in sad triumph on thy faded cheek,
And half obscures the lustre of thy beauties.

Mat. Talk not of beauty, 'tis our sex's bane,
And leads but to destruction. I abhor

The fatal gift. O! would it had pleas'd heav'n
To brand my homely features with the mark
Of foul deformity, or let me pass
Unknown, and undistinguish'd from the herd
Of vulgar forms, save by the partial eye
Of my lov'd Edwin; then had I been blest
With charms unenvied, and a guiltless love.

Ber. Where is thy Edwin now?

Mat. Alas! I know not.
'Tis now three years since last these eyes beheld
Their dearest object. In that humble vale,
Whence, as I told thee, Malcolm's fury drove me,
There first we met. O! how I cherish still
The fond remembrance! There we first exchanged
Our mutual vows, the day of happiness
Was fixt; it came, and in a few short hours
He had been made indissolubly mine,
When fortune, envious of our happiness,
And William's danger, call'd him to the field.

Ber. And since that parting have ye never met?

Mat. O never, Bertha, never but in thought.
Imagination, kind anticipator
Of love's pleasures, brings us oft together.
Oft, as I sit within my lonely tent,
And cast my wishful eyes o'er yonder plain,
In ev'ry passing traveller I strive
To trace his image, hear his lovely voice
In ev'ry sound, and fain would flatter me
Edwin still lives, still loves his lost Matilda!

Ber. Who knows but fate, propitious to thy love,
May guide him hither?

Mat. Gracious heav'n forbid!
Consider, Bertha, if the chance of war
Should this way lead him, he must come in arms
Against his brother: Oh! 'tis horrible
To think on. Should they meet, and Edwin fall,
What shall support me? And if vict'ry smiles

Upon my love, how dear will be the purchase
By Morcar's blood! Then must I lose my friend,
My guardian, my protector—ev'ry way
Matilda must be wretched.

Ber. Is there ought
In Bertha's power?

Mat. Wilt thou dispatch, my friend,
Some trusty messenger with these?—Away.
(Gives her letters.
I'll meet thee in my tent—farewel. [*Exit* BER.
Mean time
One hope remains, the gen'rous Siward—he
Might save me still. His sympathetic heart
Can feel for the afflicted.—I have heard,
(Such is the magic pow'r of sacred friendship)
When the impetuous Morcar scatters fear
And terror round him, he, and he alone,
Can stem the rapid torrent of his passion,
And bend him, though reluctant, to his will;
And see, in happy hour, he comes this way.
Now, Fortune, be propitious! if there be,
As I have heard, an eloquence in grief,
And those can most persuade, who are most wretched,
I shall not pass unpitied.

Enter SIWARD.

Siw. Ha! in tears,
Matilda! What new grief, what cruel foe
To innocence and beauty, thus could vex
Thy gentle spirit?

Mat. Canst thou ask the cause,
When thou beholdst me still in shameful bonds,
A wretched captive, friendless and forlorn,
Without one ray of hope to sooth my sorrows.

Siw. Can she, whose beauteous form, and fair demeanour,

Charm ev'ry eye, and conquer ev'ry heart,
Can she be wretched? can she want a friend,
Whom Siward honours, and whom Morcar loves?
O! if thou knew'st with what unceasing ardour,
What unexampled tenderness and truth,
He doats upon thee, sure thou might'st be wrought
At least to pity.

Mat. Urge no more, my lord,
Th' ungrateful subject; but too well I know
How much thy friend deserves, how much, alas!
I owe him!—If it be Earl Morcar's wish
To make me happy, why am I detain'd
A pris'ner here, spite of his solemn promise
He would restore me to my royal master,
Or send me back to the desiring arms
Of the afflicted Ranulph, who, in tears
Of bitt'rest anguish, mourns his long-lost daughter?
Surely, my lord, it ill becomes a soldier
To forfeit thus his honour and his word.

Siw. I own it; yet the cause pleads strongly for him.
If, by thy own too pow'rful charms misled,
He deviates from the paths of rigid honour,
Matilda might forgive. Thou know'st he lives
But in thy smiles; his love-enchanted soul
Hangs on those beauties he would wish to keep
For ever in his sight.

Mat. Indulgent heav'n
Keep me for ever from it! O, my lord,
If e'er thy heart with gen'rous pity glow'd
For the distress'd; if e'er thy honest zeal
Could boast an influence o'er the man you love;
O! now exert thy pow'r, assist, direct,
And save thy friend from ruin and Matilda.
There are, my lord, who most offend, where most
They wish to please. Such often is the fate
Of thy unhappy friend, when he pours forth

His ardent soul in vows of tend'rest passion;
'Tis with such rude and boist'rous violence
As suits but ill the hero or the lover.
Siw. I know his weakness, know his follies all,
And feel 'em but too well: He loves with transport,
And hates with fury. Warm'd with fierce desire,
Or strong resentment, his impetuous soul
Is hurried on, till reason quits her seat,
And passion takes the loosely-flowing rein;
Then all is rage, confusion, and despair.
And yet, when cool reflection hath remov'd
The veil of error, he will weep his faults
With such a sweet contrition, as would melt
The hardest heart to pity and forgiveness.
O! he has virtues that may well atone
For all his venial rashness,—that deserve
A sov'reign's love, and claim a nation's praise;
Virtues that merit happiness and thee.
Why wilt thou thus despise my noble friend?
His birth and fortune, with the rank he bears
Amongst the first of England's peers, will raise thee
As far above thy sex, in wealth and pow'r,
As now thou art in beauty.
Mat. O, my lord!
'Tis not the pride, the luxury of life,
The splendid robe and glitt'ring gem, that knits
The lasting bonds of mutual happiness:
Where manners differ, where affections jar,
And will not kindly mix together, where
The sweet harmonious concord of the mind
Is wanting, all is misery and woe.
Siw. By heav'n, thou pleadst thy own and virtue's cause,
With such bewitching eloquence, the more
Thy heart, alarm'd by diffidence, still urges

Against this union with my friend, the more
I wish to see him blest with worth like thine.
Mat. My lord, it must not be: for grant him all
The fair perfections you already see,
And I could wish to find, there is a bar
That must for ever disunite us—Born
Of Norman race, and from my earliest years
Attach'd to William's cause, I love my king,
And wish my country's peace: That king, my lord,
Whom Morcar wishes to dethrone; that peace
Which he destroys: Had he an angel's form,
With all the virtues that adorn his sex,
With all the riches fortune can bestow,
I would not wed a traitor.
Siw. Call not his errors by so harsh a name;
He has been deeply wrong'd, and souls like his
Must feel the wounds of honour, and resent them.
Alas! with thee I weep my country's fate,
Nay wish, perhaps, as well to William's cause,
And England's peace, as can the loyal daughter
Of gallant Ranulph, and would, therefore, joy
To see Matilda lend a gracious ear
To Morcar's suit. Thy reconciling charms
Might sooth his troubled soul, might heal the wounds
Of bleeding England, and unite us all
In one bright chain of harmony and love.
The gallant Edwin too—
Mat. Ha! what of him?
Know'st thou that noble youth?
Siw. So many years
Have past since last we met, by diff'rent views,
And our unhappy feuds, so long divided,
I should not recollect him; but report
Speaks loudly of his virtues. He, no doubt,
If yet he lives——
Mat. Yet lives?—Why, what, my lord?
Siw. You seem much mov'd.

Mat. Forgive me; but whene'er
This sad idea rises to my mind,
Of brother against brother arm'd, my soul
Recoils with horror.
Siw. 'Tis a dreadful thought:
Would I could heal that cruel breach! but then
Thou might'st do much, the task is left for thee.
Mat. For me? Alas! it is not in my power.
Siw. In thine, and thine alone. O think, Matilda!
How great thy glory, and how great thy praise,
To be the blessed instrument of peace,
The band of union 'twixt contending brothers!
Thou see'st them now like two descending floods,
Whose rapid torrents meeting, half o'erwhelm
The neighb'ring plains: Thy gentle voice might still
The angry waves, and bid their waters flow
In one united stream, to bless the land.
Mat. That flatt'ring thought beams comfort on my soul
Amidst my sorrows; bear me witness, heav'n!
Could poor Matilda be the happy means
Of reconcilement: Could these eyes behold
The noble youths embracing, and embrac'd
In the firm cords of amity and love;
O! it would make me ample recompence
For all my griefs, nor would I more complain,
But rest me in the silent grave, well pleas'd
To think, at last, I had not liv'd in vain.
Siw. Cherish that virtuous thought, illustrious maid,
And let me hope my friend may still be happy.
Mat. I wish it from my soul: But see, my lord,
Earl Morcar comes this way, with hasty steps,
Across the lawn. I must retire: Farewel!
You'll not forget my humble suit.
Siw. O! no,

I will do all that loveliest innocence
And worth, like thine, deserve. Farewel: Mean time
Remember, Siward's ev'ry wish, the bliss
Of Morcar, Edwin's life, the public peace,
And England's welfare, all depend on thee.
[*Exit* MAT.

Siw. (*Alone.*) There's no alternative but this; my friend
Must quit Matilda, or desert the cause
We've rashly promis'd to support—Perhaps
The last were best—both shall be tried—he comes.

Enter MORCAR.

Mor. O, Siward! was not that
The fair Matilda whom you parted from?
Siw. It was.
Mor. What says she? the dear, cruel maid!
Is she still deaf? inexorable still?
Siw. You must not think of her.
Mor. What say'st thou, Siward?
Not think of her!
Siw. No. Root her from thy heart,
And gaze no more. I blush to see my friend
So lost to honour: Is it for a man,
On whom the fate of England may depend,
To quit the dangerous post, where duty calls,
And all the bus'ness of the war, to sigh
And whine in corners for a captive woman?
Resume the hero, Morcar, and subdue
This idle passion.
Mor. Talk not thus of love,
The great refiner of the human heart,
The source of all that's great, of all that's good;
Of joy, of pleasure—If it be a weakness,
It is a weakness which the best have felt:
I would not wish to be a stranger to it.

Siw. Let me entreat thee, if thou valuest life,
Or fame, or honour, quit Matilda.
Mor. Yes:
I thank you for your council. 'Tis the advice
Of cold, unfeeling wisdom, kindly meant
To make me prudent, and to leave me wretched:
But thus it is, that proud exulting health
Is ever ready to prescribe a cure
For pain and sickness which it never knew.
Siw. There too thou err'st; for I have known its joys
And sorrows too. In early life I lost
The partner of my soul. E'er since that hour
I bade adieu to love, and taught my soul
To offer her devotions at the shrine
Of sacred friendship; there *my* vows are paid:
Morcar best knows the idol of my worship.
Mor. I know and love thee for it: But, O! my friend,
I cannot force this tyrant from my breast;
E'en now I feel her here, she sits enthron'd
Within the foldings of my heart, and he
Who tears her thence must draw the life-blood from me.
My morning slumbers, and my midnight dreams,
Are haunted by Matilda.
Siw. To be thus
The slave of one that scorns thee, O! 'tis base,
Mean, and unworthy of thee.
Mor. I will bear
That scorn no longer: Thou hast rous'd me, Siward;
I will enjoy the glorious prize; she's mine,
By right of conquest mine. I will assert
A victor's claim, and force her to be happy.
Siw. That must not be. It ill becomes the man
Who takes up arms against a tyrant's pow'r,

To adopt a tyrant's maxims; force and love
Are terms that never can be reconciled.
You will not, must not do it.
Mor. Must not! who
Shall dare oppose me?
Siw. Honour, conscience, love,
The sense of shame, your virtue, and your friend.
Whilst I have life, or pow'r, I will not see
Matilda wrong'd.
Mor. You are her champion then
It seems, her favour'd, happy friend;—perhaps
Her fond admirer too. I'll-fated Morcar!
I see it but too well. I'm lost, abandon'd;
Alike betray'd by friendship and by love.
I thank you, sir, you have perform'd your office,
And merit your reward.
Siw. Unkind reproach!
Did I for this desert my sov'reign's cause,
My peaceful home, and all its joys, to serve
Ungrateful Morcar? Why did I rebel?
The haughty William never injur'd me.
For thee alone I fought, for thee I conquer'd;
And, but for thee, long since I had employ'd
My gallant soldiers to a nobler purpose,
Than loit'ring thus in idle camp to hear
A love-sick tale, and sooth a mad man's phrenzy.
Mor. You could? Away, and leave me then: withdraw
Your boasted aid, and bid Northumbria's sons
Bend to the tyrant's yoke, whilst I alone
Defend the cause of freedom and my conntry.
Here let us part. Remove your loiterers,
And join the usurper.
Siw. Mark the diff'rence now
Betwixt blind passion and undaunted friendship:
You are impatient of the keen reproof,

Because you merit:—I can bear it all,
Because I've not deserv'd it.

Enter an OFFICER.

Offi. Good my lords,
Forgive this rough intrusion, but the danger,
I trust, will plead my pardon. As I watch'd,
From yonder tow'r, a dusky cloud appear'd,
As if from distant troops advancing, soon
I saw their armour glitter in the sun;
With rapid motion they approach'd; each moment
We must expect them here.

Siw. Why, let 'em come,
Already I have order'd fit disposal
Of all our little force. Away, good Osmond,
Be silent and be ready. [*Exit* OFFICER.
Now, my friend,
Thou art as welcome to thy Siward's breast,
As dear as ever.—When the man I love,
Walks in the paths of error, I reprove him
With honest freedom; but when danger comes
Upon him, I forget his faults, and flee
With all a lover's ardour to his rescue;
His sorrows and his wants alone remember'd,
And all his follies buried in oblivion.

Mor. Thou hast disarm'd me now. This pierces more
Than all the bitter poison of reproach
Which thou hast pour'd upon me. O! 'twas treason
Against the sacred majesty of friendship,
To doubt thy honour, or suspect thy virtue.
Thou wilt forgive: But when the wounded mind
Is torn with passion, ev'ry touch is pain;
You should not probe so deeply.

Siw. 'Twas my duty.
But come, no more of that. The foe advances.

If we succeed, as my prophetic soul
Foretels we shall—I have some comfort for you—
If not, we'll borrow courage from despair,
And die like men. Thou stand'st upon the rock
Of danger, and the yawning precipice
Opens before us; I will snatch thee from it,
Or leap the gulph, and perish with my friend.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Fortress belonging to MORCAR.

EDWIN *alone (in chains.)*

Edw. It is the will of heav'n, and must be done.
The hard-fought field is lost, and here I am
A pris'ner in my brother's camp: alas!
That fortune thus should guide me to a foe
Whom most I wish'd to shun! We little thought
The troops, by Morcar led, had this way bent
Their ill-directed course: but providence
Hath so ordain'd, perhaps, to heal the wounds
Of civil discord. O! unhappy Edwin,
For what art thou reserv'd? No matter what.
Since fate depriv'd me of my dear Matilda,
Whom I for three long years have sought in vain,
Life hath been irksome to me: this, perchance,
May end it—For, who knows if nature yet
May live within the conq'ror's breast, to plead
A brother's pardon? Yet he knows me not,
But soon he must—Ha! who comes here? Earl Siward!—
The second in command, to whom, o'erpower'd
By circling foes, and fainting with my wounds,

I yielded up my sword. If fame say true,
He bears a mind too great to look with scorn
On the oppress'd, or triumph o'er misfortune.

Enter SIWARD.

Siw. Stranger, whoe'er thou art, be comforted;
Thy fate hath thrown thee into noble hands,
Who know thy merit. May I ask thy name?

Edw. I am a poor abandon'd wretch, the sport
Of Fortune; one whose least affliction is
To be a captive, and from ev'ry eye
Would wish to hide the story of my fate:
Too soon my name and sorrows will be known.

Siw. Respect is ever due to misery:
I will not urge thee further; all I hope,
That gen'rous pity could afford to sooth
Calamity like thine, by my command
Hath been extended to thee. Here awhile
You must remain a pris'ner, but e'er long
I hope to greet thee by a fairer name,
And rank thee as our friend.

Edw. Your gen'rous orders
Have been obey'd, and I acknowledge it
With grateful heart. May I not ask the fate
Of him who fought so nobly by my side,
That brave old man?

Siw. The gallant Ranulph—

Edw. Yes;
My fellow captive.

Siw. He is safe and free.

Edw. Ha! free! Thank heav'n!

Siw. The gen'rous Morcar, urg'd
By my entreaties, pardon'd and releas'd him,
Though much our soldiers murmur'd, and demanded
His life and yours; a sacrifice, they said,
Due to the manes of their slaughter'd friends;
But mercy has prevail'd.

Edw. Whate'er becomes
Of an unhappy wanderer, like me,
For your kind treatment of the aged Ranulph,
Accept my thanks; it was a precious boon;
Morcar may find me not unworthy of it.
To-day I am his captive, but to-morrow
May see me his deliverer: for know
My royal master, the victorious William,
With eagle swiftness, soon will follow me
With twenty times your force. As this shall prove
Or true, or false, so deal with me; remember
I warn'd you of it.

Siw. And remember thou
That I with joy receive the welcome news:
Welcome to me, for I am William's friend.

Edw. Thou canst not then be mine, or England's foe:
With such a heart as thine, so nobly form'd
To feel for the afflicted, satisfied,
For thou seem'st, of William's royal right,
What could engage thee in this foul revolt,
This base rebellion?

Siw. What but the great bond
Of kindred souls, inviolable friendship!
The only solid bliss on this side heav'n,
That doubles all the joys of human life,
And, by dividing, lessens ev'ry woe.

Edw. Who knows but this day's sad event may prove
The happy means to heal a nation's wounds,
And sooth our jarring factions into peace?

Siw. Had Morcar thought with me, long since that end
Had been obtain'd; but Morcar is—

Edw. Inexorable.
So I have heard, and therefore little hope
To change his nature. O! could he be wrought

To sweet oblivion of his wrongs; to bury
His deep resentment. Mine should be the task,
A task, heav'n knows, I would with joy perform,
To reconcile offended majesty:
To soften all his errors, plead his pardon,
And give my sov'reign one brave soldier more.

Siw. When next we meet I trust it shall be so:
Mean time, let me prepare him for the change;
Retire a while—e'er long we'll send for thee,
For ev'ry moment I expect him here:
Thy freedom and thy happiness shall be
My first concern, for thou hast well deserv'd it.

Edw. Farewel. Be quick in your resolves; the time
Requires it; and be wise e'er 'tis too late.

[*Exit* EDWIN.

Siw. (*Alone.*) I hope we shall. This well-tim'd victory,
If rightly us'd, may smooth our way to peace.
Now, Morcar, all thy happiness depends
Upon thyself alone. Now, friendship, raise
Thy pow'rful voice, and force him to be happy.
He will, he must—he comes—

Enter MORCAR.

Siw. My conq'ror, welcome!

Mor. Thrice welcome to my arms, my noble Siward;
At length we meet in joy, the day is ours;
Thanks to thy friendly aid.

Siw. We must not boast;
'Twas hardly purchas'd, and has cost us dear:
You follow'd 'em too close.

Mor. I own 'twas rash;
My youthful ardour urg'd the keen pursuit
Too far; and but for thee I had been lost.
In war, thy arm protects me; and in peace,

Thy counsels guide. O! how shall I return
Thy goodness? Thou wert born to save thy friend.
Siw. Away. I'll not be thank'd. I've done my duty;
And if thou think'st thyself indebted for it,
Repay me not with flattery, but with love.
E'er since my soul, with thine congenial, met
In social bands, and mark'd thee for her own,
Thy int'rest and thy happiness have been
My first ambition; and when thou art blest
With all thy soul can wish for, Siward then,
And then alone, will have his full reward.
Mor. O unexampled faithfulness and truth!
But say, my Siward, is our loss so great?
Siw. The flow'r of half our troops. But 'tis not now
A time to weep, for I have glorious tidings,
That much import thy happiness.
Mor. Ha! what?
Siw. Know that amongst our captives I have ta'en
A noble prize, will make us full amends
For ev'ry loss—the gallant Ranulph.
Mor. Ha!
Matilda's father! then I'm satisfied.
The wily chief! by heav'n he shall repay me
For her unkindness: Give him to my rage,
To my resentment, to my injur'd love.
Where is he, Siward?
Siw. I have set him free.
Mor. Ha! free! Thy ill-timed mercy hath betray'd
Our cause. The tyrant would have ransom'd him
With half his kingdom.
Siw. Still thy rapid passions
O'erpow'r thy reason. What, if it should serve
A better purpose; smooth thy paths to bliss,
And gain Matilda for thee!

Mor. O, my friend!
My Siward, do not flatter me: By heav'n,
Her kind consent would give my ravish'd soul
More true and heart-felt happiness than could
A thousand vict'ries o'er the proud usurper.
Siw. Know then, I gave him liberty and life
On these conditions—That he should withdraw
His pow'rs from William's aid, and never more
Assist his cause; the time would come, I told him,
That he should know to whom he ow'd the boon,
And how he might repay it.
Mor. That was kind,
Indeed, my Siward, that was like a friend.
O! thou reviv'st my drooping heart; but tell me,
Did my Matilda, let me call her mine,
Did she acknowledge, did she thank thee for it?
Siw. O! I assum'd no merit but to thee,
And to thy gen'rous, unexampled love
Did I attribute all. She sigh'd, and wept,
Pour'd forth a thousand blessings on thy head——
Mor. And dost thou think, my Siward, that one ray
Of hope remains?
Siw. The clouds already vanish,
The prospect brightens round thee; haste, and seize
The lucky moment. When the gen'rous mind
Is sooth'd by obligation, soon it opens
To the mild dictates of humanity,
And softens into sympathy and love.
Mor. O, Siward! couldst thou teach me but to win
That lovely maid ——
Siw. The task is half perform'd
Already, and my friend shall soon be bless'd.
One thing, and one alone, remains to fix
Her doubtful heart, if yet a doubt remains.
Mor. O! name it, Siward; if 'tis in the pow'r
Of wealth to purchase, or of victory

In the fair field of glory to acquire,
It shall not long be wanting.
Siw. It requires
No price, but such as Morcar well can pay;
No vict'ry, but the vict'ry o'er thyself,
And thy own passions—Give up thy resentment,
Make peace with William, and Matilda's thine.
Mor. Matilda mine! and must I purchase her
At the dear price of honour? with the loss
Of all my soul holds dear, my country's welfare?
My word——
Siw. Away! whilst prudence warranted
Our honest zeal, I was the first to aid
Thy just revenge; but valour, ill-advis'd,
And ill-exerted in a hopeless cause,
Degen'rates into rashness. You mistake
The pride of honour for the pride of virtue.
Mor. And wouldst thou have me bend beneath the yoke
Of ignominious slav'ry, quit the cause
Of heav'n-born freedom, and betray my friends?
Siw. I'd have thee just and happy—We have been
Successful, let us now be generous,
Whilst we have something to bestow; nor wait
Till fickle fortune from our brows shall tear
The blasted wreath, and leave us nought to give.
Too long already have we sacrific'd,
At proud ambition's altar, to revenge;
Now let us offer at the shrine of peace,
And sacrifice——
Mor. To love, and to Matilda;
It shall be so—the struggle's past—away,
My Siward, haste, and tell her, I obey;
Her laws, her king, her master shall be mine;
I have no will but hers, and in her eyes
Will read my duty—Yet a moment stay.
What will my brave companions of the war,

My fellow soldiers, say? Will they approve
This unexpected change?

Siw. I know them firm
In their obedience, and resolv'd to act
As you command—But I will see 'em strait,
And urge such pow'rful reasons as may best
Secure them to our purpose. Fare thee well.

Mor. Siward, thy kind anticipating care
Prevents my ev'ry wish—But say, my friend,
Where is the gallant chief whom we subdu'd,
Who fought so hardly, and so nobly fell?

Siw. In yonder tent, a wretched pris'ner still,
He counts the tedious hours; a heavy gloom
Sits on his brow, as if some deep-felt sorrow
Oppress'd his noble mind—We must release him.

Mor. Thou know'st, my Siward, thrice we had o'erpow'r'd
His troops, and thrice his single valour turn'd
The fortune of the day: Since first I trod
The paths of glory, ne'er did I behold
Such deeds of valour wrought by mortal hand;
I almost envied, though I conquer'd him.
He wore his beaver up, nor could I trace
His features, but he bears a noble form;
Know'st thou his quality or name?

Siw. Not yet;
He seems industrious to conceal them both
From ev'ry eye.

Mor. Some deity protects him,
As its peculiar care: for, as I rais'd
My sword against him, whether the soft passion
That triumphs o'er me, had unmann'd my soul,
I know not; but, bereft of all its pow'r,
My nerveless arm dropp'd ineffectual down,
And let him 'scape me.

Siw. 'Tis most true, I saw
And wonder'd at it. When you left the field,

With desperate rage he rush'd intrepid on,
And seem'd to court his fate, till circling foes
Compell'd him to resign, and yield his sword.

Mor. Away. I burn with ardour to forgive,
To free, and to embrace him: fly, my Siward.
Let him approach, he could not wish to meet,
In happier hour, the master of his fate,
For now, methinks, I could be reconcil'd
To ev'ry foe. Away, my Siward, haste
And send him to me.

Siw. Treat him like a friend,
He may be useful. Such distinguish'd merit
Must have its influence: he commands, no doubt,
The royal ear, and may procure such terms
As William may with honour yield, and we
Without a blush accept. [*Exit* SIWARD.

Mor. (*Alone.*) Farewel. And now
How stands the great account? Can I quit
Myself, or shall I be condemn'd before
Thy great tribunal, all-repaying justice?
But fair Matilda wipes out ev'ry stain,
'Tis she commands me to forgive, and she
Must be obey'd; I'm not the first apostate
From honour's cause the tyrant love has made.
My friend too urg'd the change—
[*Guards bring in* EDWIN *chained.*
He's here—Strike off
Those ignominious chains—he has deserv'd
A better fate. [*Guards unchain him.*
Stranger, whoe'er thou art, [*Turning to* EDWIN.
Thy gallant bearing in th' unequal conflict,
For we had twice thy numbers, hath endear'd
A soldier to a soldier. Vulgar minds
To their own party, and the narrow limits
Of partial friendship, meanly may confine
Their admiration; but the brave will see,
And seeing, praise the virtues of a foe.

Edw. (*Aside.*) O, powerful nature, how thou work'st within me!

Mor. Still silent! still conceal'd! perchance thou fear'st,
Knowing thy rank and name, I might recal
My promis'd pardon; but be confident,
For by that sacred honour, which I hold
Dearer than life, I promise here to free,
And to protect thee;—did'st thou hide from me
My deadliest foe; should William's self appear
Before me, he who hath so deeply wrong'd me,
So long oppos'd: Nay, should I hear the voice
Of that advent'rous, rash, misguided youth,
Whom yet I cannot hate—my cruel brother—
I could forgive him.

Edw. (*Discovering himself.*) Then—behold him here.

Mor. Edwin! Amazement! By what wond'rous means,
Mysterious Providence, dost thou unfold
Thy secret purposes? I little thought,
When last we met, what heav'n-protected victim
Escap'd my sword.

Edw. With horror I recal
The dreadful circumstance. Throughout the battle
I knew, and carefully avoided thee.

Mor. O, Edwin! how, on this propitious day,
Have victory, fame and friendship, fortune, love,
And nature, all conspir'd to make me blest!
We have been foes too long—Of that no more.
My Edwin, welcome! Once more to thy arm
Receive a brother.

Edw. Yet a moment stay:
By Nature touch'd, the same accordant string,
That vibrates on thy heart, now beats on mine;
But honour, and the duty which I owe
The best of kings, restrains the fond embrace

I wish to share, and bids me ask, if yet
In Morcar I behold my sov'reign's foe.
If it be so, take back thy proffer'd freedom,
Take back my forfeit life: I would not wish
To be indebted for it to—a traitor.

Mor. Perhaps I may deserve a better name;
Perhaps I may be changed.

Edw. I hope thou art;
For this I came, for this I yielded to thee,
To tell thee William's strength is ev'ry hour
Increasing: if thou mean'st to make thy peace,
Now is the crisis—

Mor. Edwin, stop, nor urge
Such mean unworthy motives as alone
Could thwart my purpose. Morcar cannot fear,
But Morcar can be generous; for know,
Before I saw thee here I had resolv'd
To sheath my sword, and be the conq'ror's friend;
For, O! there is a cause——

Edw. Whate'er the cause,
Th' effect is glorious. Now thou art again
My brother. Here, let us once more unite
The long-dissever'd cord. [*They embrace.*

Mor. And never more
May blind resentment, faction, party rage,
Envy, or jealous fear, dissolve the tie!
And now, my Edwin, blushing, I confess,
Not to thy tender care for Morcar's safety,
To friendship's counsel, or to reason's voice,
Owe we this wish'd-for change. A female hand
Directs and wills it.

Edw. Ha! a woman!

Mor. Yes,
If such I ought to call that form divine,
Which triumphs here, who rules my ev'ry thought,
My ev'ry action guides. In yonder tent
A beauteous captive dwells, who hath enslav'd

Her conq'ror: She demands the sacrifice;
She would not give her hand to William's foe,
And therefore, only, Morcar is his friend.
Edw. I could have wish'd that this important change
Were to the hero, not the lover, due.
Mor. I am above deceit, and own my weakness;
But thou shalt see her—Yes, my Edwin, thou
Shalt bear the welcome tidings to my love.
Thy presence will bear witness to the change;
Thy freedom, and the joyful news thou bring'st
Of our blest union, will confirm it to her.
Wilt thou, my Edwin—
Edw. Do not ask me what
I must refuse. I would do much to serve
A friend and brother; but a task of joy
Ill suits a soul oppress'd with griefs like mine.
O! I could tell thee—but 'twould be unkind,
When thou art ent'ring on the paths of bliss,
To stop thee with my melancholy tale.
Mor. Whate'er thy griefs, I pity, and hereafter
May find the means to lessen or remove them;
Mean time this tender office may divert
Thy sorrows; nay, if thou deny'st me, Edwin,
I shall not think our union is sincere.
Edw. Then be it so.
Mor. I'll send a trusty slave
That shall conduct thee to her. Soon I mean
To follow thee—away—begone and prosper.
But, O my brother! if thou hast a heart
That is not steel'd with stoic apathy
Against the magic of all-conq'ring love,
Beware of beauty's pow'r; for she has charms
Would melt the frozen breast of hoary age,
Or draw the lonely hermit from his cell
To gaze upon her.
Edw. Know, thy fears are vain;

For long, long since, by honour's sacred ties,
United to the loveliest of her sex,
Edwin, like Morcar, is to one alone
Devoted, and my heart is fix'd as thine.
Mor. Then I am blest. Thy sympathetic soul,
With warmer feelings, shall express my passion,
Wak'd by the fond remembrance of thy own.

Go then, thy kind returning friendship prove,
Go, plead with all the eloquence of love;
And as thou dost thy brother's anguish tell,
Still on thy lips may soft persuasion dwell!
Urge my fond suit with energy divine,
Nor cease till thou hast made the lovely captive mine.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

MATILDA'S *Tent, with a distant view of the Camp.*

MATILDA, BERTHA.

Mat. O Bertha! I have had such frightful dreams,
They harrow'd up my soul.
Ber. It is the work
Of busy fancy in thy troubled mind;
Give it no heed.
Mat. O! It was more, much more
Than fancy ever form'd; 'twas real all;
It haunts me still, and ev'ry circumstance
Is now before me; but I'll tell thee all.
Scarce had I clos'd my eyes, to seek that rest
Which long had been a stranger, when methought
Alone I wander'd through a mazy wood,
Beset with thorns and briars on ev'ry side,
The mournful image of my wretched state:
When, from a winding walk, the beauteous form
Of my lov'd Edwin seem'd to glide across,
And ran with haste to meet me: But, behold!
A tiger rush'd between, and seiz'd upon him:
I shriek'd aloud.

Ber. 'Twas terrible.
Mat. But mark
What follow'd: for a gleam of light broke in,
And sav'd me from despair: When cross the glade
A gen'rous lion, as with pity mov'd
At the unequal conflict, darted forth,
And sprung with vengeance on the spotted beast,
Who turn'd with fury on his natural foe,
And loos'd my Edwin; he escap'd, and fled:
I wak'd in agonies.
Ber. Be comforted;
The dream presages good: Some gen'rous friend
Shall save him from the perils of the war,
And give him to thy longing arms again.
Mat. O, never, never!

Enter an OFFICER.

Offi. Noble lady, one
From William's camp, by Morcar's orders sent,
Would crave a minute's conference, and says
He bears some news that may be welcome.
Mat. Ha!
From William's camp! O flatt'ring hope! who knows
But he may bring some tidings of my love!
Tidings, perhaps, I may not wish to hear.
Perhaps he comes to speak of Edwin's death;
Or Edwin's falsehood—Be it as it may,
I cannot be more wretched than I am.
Conduct him hither. [*Exit Officer.*
O my fluttering heart!
Look yonder! how imagination forms
What most we wish for; see he comes—It is,
It is my Edwin—Save me, Bertha! O!
(As he enters she faints.

Enter EDWIN.

Edw. What do I see? Matilda here! she faints!

Am I deserted then? abandon'd, lost,
Betray'd by her I love? She breathes, she lives!
But not for me—for Morcar; for my brother.
Mat. (To Ber.) Where is he? O! it was delusion all;
The form deceiv'd me. Had it been my love,
He would have flown with rapture to me—See
He stands far off, and will not look upon me.
Edw. I dare not.
Mat. Is it thus we meet again?
Is this the kind, the tender, faithful Edwin?
Edw. Art thou Matilda? Speak; for I am lost
In wild astonishment. It cannot be.
In Morcar's camp! Is this the lovely captive
That I should meet?
Mat. All-seeing heav'n,
Bear witness for me: If, from that sad hour
When last we parted, this devoted heart
Hath ever wander'd, ever cast one thought,
Or form'd a wish for any bliss but thee,
Despise me, Edwin; slight me, cast me off
To infamy and shame.
Edw. I must, I must
Believe thee; Yet, 'tis strange—when thou shalt know
From whom I came, and what my errand here.
Thou wilt not call me cruel or unkind,
When I shall tell thee I am come to claim
Another's right,—O! heav'n, another's right
To my Matilda;—to request thy hand
For Morcar.
Mat. For thy brother!
Edw. Yes, ev'n now
We parted.—Here he told me I should meet
A beauteous captive; little did I think
It was Matilda, whom he long had woo'd;
Whose gen'rous heart, he hop'd, would now accept

A convert made to loyalty by love;
She only waited for that blest event,
With mutual ardour to return his passion.
Can it be thus? Alas! thy presence here
Confirms it but too well.

Mat. Appearance oft,
By strange events, and causeless jealousy,
Confounds the guilty with the innocent.
But sure my Edwin's noble mind disdains
To cherish low suspicion; 'tis a vice
Abhorrent to thy nature, and Matilda
Will never practise it on thee. True love
Knows not distrust, or diffidence, but rests
On its own faith secure, and hopes to meet
The truth it merits.

Edw. Can this be the voice
Of falsehood?—Can those lips?—

Mat. Mistaken man!
Couldst thou e'er credit the delusive tale?
Couldst thou believe I had so soon forgot
My plighted faith? But since I am suspected,
Return, and bear this answer back to Morcar.
First say, I thank him for the choice he made
Of thee to be the herald of his love:
For what is there Matilda can refuse,
That Edwin could request?

Edw. O! that recals
A thousand tender thoughts——

Mat. Go tell him too,
Whate'er I rashly promis'd but to gain
A few short moments, to preserve my king,
And save a father's life, I never meant
To feign a passion which I could not feel;
For I was destin'd to another's arms;
To one, who, now regardless of his vows
To poor Matilda, after three long years

Of cruel absence from her, comes at last
To doubt her honour, and suspect her love.
Edw. O! never, never. Sooner will I doubt
The pow'rs of nature, and believe these eyes
Can misinterpret ev'ry object here,
Than think thee false. O! take me to thy arms,
And bury all my doubts.—Canst thou forgive
The jealous warmth of agonizing passion?
Mat. I can; I must. But say, to what blest chance
Am I indebted for this happy moment?
Edw. The chance of war. I am a prisoner here,
And but for thee—
Mat When I shall tell thee all
That I have suffer'd since we parted last,
Thou will not blame, but pity, poor Matilda.
Meanwhile be calm; it is not now a time
For idle doubts and visionary fears,
When real dangers threat. I see already,
By thy imperfect tale, what misery
Must soon await us, when the fiery Earl
Shall know this strange event.
Edw. And wherefore know it?
Why not conceal our passion, till some means
Of freedom offer?
Mat. I abhor the thought.
No, Edwin, no. The crisis of our fate
Approaches. Never let us stain our loves
With crooked fraud and base dissimulation.
Hark! didst thou hear a voice in yonder grove?
Siward in conf'rence with the haughty Earl;
Behold them—see—they part—and Morcar hastes,
With quick impatient step, to know his fate.
Now summon all thy pow'rs.
Edw. I am prepared.
He comes: a few short minutes will determine

Whether Matilda plays the hypocrite,
Or is deserving of her Edwin's love.

Enter MORCAR.

Mor. At length I hope Matilda's satisfied.
Edwin has told thee what a sacrifice
My heart hath made. Ambition, glory, pride,
And fierce resentment, bend beneath thy power,
And yield the palm to all-subduing love.
Yes, thou hast conquered. I am William's friend;
The struggle's past. I have performed the task
Assigned, and come to claim my just reward.

Mat. By virtuous acts, the self-approving mind
Is amply paid, nor seeks a recompence
From ought beside. You have redeemed your honour,
Turned to the paths of duty, and discharged
The debt you owe your country and your king:
England and William will be grateful for it.
What can you wish for more?

Mor. There is a prize,
More welcome far, beyond whate'er a king
Or kingdom can bestow—thy love—

Mat. My lord!

Mor. If to have saved thee from the brutal rage
Of pitiless ruffians; if to have renounced
A victor's claim, and be myself the slave
Of her I conquered; if to have released
My bitterest foe, because allied to thee;
If, after all my cruel wrongs, to accept
The proud oppressor's hand, can merit ought,
I am not quite unworthy of the boon.

Mat. The good and just, my lord, demand our praise,
And generous deeds will claim the tribute due,
The debt of humble gratitude; but love,
Love, that must mark the colour of our days

For good or ill, for happiness or woe,
'Tis not the gift of fortune, or of fame,
Nor earned by merit, nor acquired by virtue.
All the rich treasures, which, or wealth, or power,
Have to bestow, can never purchase that
Which the free heart alone itself must give.

Mor. Give it with freedom then to him who most
Hath studied to deserve—

Mat. You talk, my lord,
As if the right of conquest could bestow
A right more precious, and a dearer claim;
But know, for now 'tis time to throw aside
The veil that long hath hid from Morcar's eyes
The secret of my soul; and say at last
I never can be thine.

Mor. Ha! Never! O,
Recal that word!

Mat. I must not: Edwin knows
There is a bar of adamant between,
That must for ever part us.

Mor. Ha! for ever!
Distraction! can it be? Take heed, Matilda,
I am not to be mocked thus. O my brother!
Didst thou not hear her? But astonishment
Has closed thy lips in silence—Never mine!
And wherefore not be mine? [*Turning to* MATILDA.

Mat. Because I am
Another's—Well I know our hapless sex,
So custom wills, and arbitrary man,
Is taught in fearful silence to conceal
The honest feelings of a tender heart:
Else, wherefore should Matilda blush to own
A virtuous passion for the best of men?

Mor. A virtuous passion! grant me patience, heaven!
I am betrayed, abandoned, lost. Another's!
Some fawning slave, some Norman plunderer,

Rich with the ravished spoils of English valour,
Hath snared her easy heart, and tortured mine.
But I will drag him from his dark abode;
Where'er he lurks, he shall not 'scape my vengeance.
Thou hear'st her, Edwin.

Edw. Aye: Who would not wish
To hear the voice of Nature, and of Love,
Thus nobly pleading by the lips of Truth?

Mor. Amazement! Thou art linked with the vile slave
That hath usurped my right. All, all conspire
To make me wretched.

Edw. Why should Morcar think
That lovely maid would act beneath herself,
And make so mean a choice? Now, on my soul,
I doubt not but the object of her love
Hath earned the glorious prize, and will be found
Deserving of it.

Mor. Thou know'st him then?

Edw. I do;
Know him as brave, as noble as thyself:
One who would scorn, howe'er the outward act
Might seem unworthy of him, to do ought
That should disgrace his family and name.
A man he is of yet untainted honour,
Of birth and valour equal to thy own,
Though fortune frowns upon him.

Mor. Now by heaven,
But that I know thy eyes were never blest
With my Matilda's charms, I should suspect
Thou hadst betrayed the sacred trust reposed
In thy false heart, by unsuspecting friendship,
And wert thyself the traitor.

Edw. Think so still.
Let Fancy, ever busy to torment
The jealous mind, alarm thee with the thought
Of seeing him whom thou hast thus reviled;

Stand forth, and dare the proof; suppose him here
Before thee, ready to assert his claim,
His prior right to all the joys that love
And fair Matilda can bestow: Then look
On me, and know thy rival in—thy brother.

Mor. Confusion! horror! misery! O heaven!
Canst thou behold such complicated guilt,
Such unexampled perfidy, and yet
Withhold thy vengeance? Let thy lightnings blast
The base betrayer! O Matilda! false,
Deceitful, cruel woman!

Mat. 'Tis the lot
Of unprotected innocence to meet
The cruel censure, which to guilt alone
Is due. I've not deceived, I've not betrayed thee;
And wouldst thou listen to the artless tale
I could unfold—

Mor. Away! I will not hear,
Nor see, nor think of thee. Deceitful villain!
Was this thy kind concern for Morcar's safety?
Was it for this that subtle Edwin came
A willing captive? boasted William's strength,
And lured me to a base, inglorious peace?
That, like a midnight ruffian, he might steal,
Unseen and unsuspected on my love,
And rob me of Matilda.

Edw. I abhor
A thought so mean; the bare suspicion stains,
With such foul blot, my honour, and my name,
I will not deign to answer thee. My birth
Alone might prove, to any sense but thine,
That I disdain it: 'Tis enough to say
I am Earl Morcar's brother.

Mor. I disclaim
All ties of nature or of friendship with thee,
And henceforth hold thee as my deadliest foe:
As such I will pursue thee, slave; for know,

Thou art my prisoner still—Who waits there? Seize
And guard this traitor——

[*Guards enter and seize on* EDWIN.

Mat. (*Kneeling to* MORCAR.) O my Lord! if e'er
Soft pity touched thy breast, if e'er thy heart
Felt the warm glow of sympathetic grief
For the unhappy, do not let the rage
Of thoughtless passion urge thee to a deed
Of horror, which, too late, thou wilt repent.
O! spare a guiltless brother, spare thyself
The bitter pangs of sad remorse that soon
Shall harrow up thy soul, when radiant truth
Shall flash conviction on thee. O! forgive
And pity.——

Edw. Rise, Matilda: 'Tis beneath
The dignity of innocence to kneel
Before proud guilt, and supplicate a tyrant.

Mat. (*Rising.*) I feel the just reproach—Forgive
me, Edwin;
Henceforth I never will disgrace thy love
By mean submission. Morcar, if thou hop'st
For future peace, or pardon, set us free.

Mor. I'll hear no more; convey her to her tent.

Mat. Edwin, adieu! If honour, virtue, truth,
And mutual love, protect the innocent,
We yet shall meet in happiness—farewel!

[*Exit* MATILDA *guarded.*

Mor. Let none have entrance there, but faithful
Siward.
Would he were here that I might pour my sorrows
Into his friendly bosom! O Siward!
Where art thou?—Ha, he comes!

Enter SIWARD.

Siw. My Lord, the troops,
Flushed with their late success, refuse all terms
Of peace with Willliam, and cry out for war
And vengeance.

Mor. They shall have it. Now, by heaven,
Thou bringest me glorious tidings—well, what more?
Siw. They have discovered that the noble pris'ner,
Who had surrendered, is thy brother Edwin;
This hath alarmed them; they suspect you both
Of vile collusion, to betray their cause,
And yield them to the tyrant. If, they say,
You mean them fair, let Edwin be confined,
And answer for the treason with his life.
Mor. And so he shall: They could not ask a boon
Which Morcar would more readily bestow;
Already their request is granted.—See
The traitor is secured. All-seeing heaven!
Thou see'st how justice will o'ertake the wicked!
Siw. What can this mean? Since last I saw my friend,
How the fair day, that shone so bright upon us,
Is suddenly o'ercast.
Mor. Alas, my Siward!
When thou shalt know—but 'tis enough to say
Matilda's false, and Edwin is—a villain.
Siw. Amazement! can it be?
Mor. It is too true;
And I am lost for ever. O Matilda!
Deceitful woman!
Siw. 'Tis not now a time
For idle plaints: Consult your safety: Fly
This moment to the camp—your presence there,
And that alone, may quell the rising storm:
Leave Edwin to my care.
Mor. I go, my Siward,
Safe in thy friendship; I entrust to thee
My just revenge. Yon moss-grown tower that hangs
O'er the deep flood—'tis under thy command—
Place double guard—he must not 'scape—his fate
Shall be determined soon. Whate'er it prove,
It cannot be more wretched than my own.

[*Exit* MORCAR.

Edw. (*Pointing to the guards.*) Where is my dungeon? My conductors here
Wait but your orders; give 'em their commission;
For you, it seems, sir, are to execute
The friendly office: Do it, and be happy.

Siw. Guards, set your pris'ner free—Thou little know'st
Of Siward's soul, to think it joys in aught
That gives another pain. I've learnt too well,
In sad affliction's hard, but wholesome school,
The lesson of humanity.

Edw. O generous Siward, if thou hast a heart
To feel for others miseries, pity mine,
And poor Matilda's: She has not deserved
A fate like this.

Siw. Alas! it rives my soul
To see the tender bonds of amity
Thus torn asunder by the very means
I fondly thought for ever would unite them;
And the fair structure, which my hopes had raised,
Of love and friendship, in a moment shrunk
From its weak base, and buried all in ruin.
If thou canst prove thy innocence, as yet
I hope thou wilt, for in that noble mien
I read a conscious pride, that would not stoop
To ought that's base; still may I hope to heal
These bleeding wounds, and sooth him to forgiveness.
Meantime be free. Give me thy sacred word,
The soldier's oath, thou wilt be found whene'er
I call upon thee; and yon tent alone
Shall be thy prison; free to range around,
Far as my guard extends.

Edw. Accept my thanks,
The humble tribute of a grateful heart;
'Tis all I have to give. The time may come
When Edwin shall repay thee as he ought.

Siw. Is there ought more, which honour, and the duty
I owe my friend, permits me to bestow,
That thou wouldst ask?

Edw. O, grant me to behold
That injured maid, to take my last farewel;
Then act as fate and Morcar shall determine.
I give the pledge of safety thou requir'st,
And will be found—speak, wilt thou listen to me?

Siw. Of that we'll talk hereafter—come—within
I'll hear thy story—Thou but know'st me yet
As Morcar's friend; hereafter thou may'st find
I am still more the friend of Truth and Virtue.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment belonging to SIWARD, *opening to a wood.*

EDWIN, MATILDA.

Edw. Thanks to the noble Siward's generous pity
For the distressed; once more we meet, Matilda,
But only meet, alas! to mourn our fate,
To feel each other's woes, and to be wretched.
Mat. Eternal blessings wait on him who thus
Could sweeten sorrow's bitter draught, and make
Captivity a blessing. O my Edwin,
A few short moments spent with those we love,
Is worth an age of common life.
Edw. With thee
Indeed it is; but we are on the verge
Of a dark precipice, and every step
Is dangerous. If Morcar should return,
And find us here together, we are lost
For ever; thou hast seen, and seen with horror,
The desperate rage of his tumultuous soul,
Let us avoid it, let us——
Mat. What, my love?
Thou art my guide, protector, guardian, all

I have to boast on earth! O! teach me where
To find some blest asylum for my woes,
And guide my footsteps to the paths of peace.
Edw. Let me entreat thee then——
Mat. O, speak! thou know'st
I have no will but thine.
Edw. Then leave me, leave
This hated roof: I have a friend within,
Who shall conduct thee to the royal camp
In safety; bear this signet to the king,
He will protect thee, and whatever fate
Decrees for me, Matilda may be happy.
Mat. O! never, never: safety dwells with thee,
And thee alone. Without my faithful Edwin,
The peopled city, and the crowded court,
Would be a desert to me. No, my love,
We will not part: The same benignant power
That led thee hither, that, beyond my hopes,
Brought my lost Edwin to these arms again,
Will still protect that virtue which it loves.
Edw. Didst thou not tell me, that this very morn
Thou hadst determined, as the only means
To shun my brother's love, on sudden flight?
Mat. But then I should have fled in search of thee.
Edw. Thou winning softness! how shall I reward
Such unexampled tenderness and truth!
Mat. By flying with me. Come, my love, lead on,
I'll follow thee to dangers and to death;
Nor perils shall affright, nor labours tire,
When thou art with me.
Edw. No: It must not be.
Mat. Why? What should keep thee here?
Edw. The ties of honour.

Mat. And are they stronger than the bonds of love?

Edw. To Siward's kind indulgence, well thou know'st,
I owe this little interval of peace,
This transient gleam of happiness with thee;
And should I break my sacred word, his life
Might answer for it; wouldst thou have me thus
Repay his kindness? No, my love: I may
Be wretched, but I cannot be ungrateful.

Mat. Must thou return then to that hateful prison
When Morcar comes?

Edw. I must. O! think when I
Am pent within a loathsome dungeon, who
Shall shelter then thy unprotected virtue?
No Edwin there to succour thee: Who knows
What brutal lust and power may dare to act
On a deserted, beauteous, friendless woman?
Distracting thought! A monarch's vengeance then
Would come too late; would make me poor amends
For my Matilda's violated charms.

Mat. He cannot be so mean, so base of soul;
Or if he should, I have a dagger here
To save me from dishonour.

Edw. What! by death?
Dreadful alternative! O! hazard not
Thy precious life, but seize the lucky moment
Which fortune gives us, e'er it be too late.

Mat. Urge me no more; already I have felt,
Too deeply felt, the pangs of absence from thee:
Another separation would be worse
Than death, and all its terrors. No, my love;
We are embarked on a tumultuous sea,
And must abide the fury of the storm.
The waves of angry fortune may o'erwhelm,
But shall not part us: We will stem the torrent,

Brave the proud ocean's rage, and gain the harbour
Of peace and happiness—or sink together.

Edw. Thou hast foretold the tempest, and behold
It rushes on us.

Enter MORCAR *and* HAROLD.

Mat. Ha! Earl Morcar here!

Mor. Harold, I thank thee; thy intelligence
Was but too true. [*Turning to* EDWIN.
Traitor! who set thee free?
They would have 'scap'd my vengeance—false Matilda!
'Tis thus I am rewarded for my love,
My ill-timed mercy to a thankless brother.
Back to thy dungeon, slave. Guards drag him hence
To prison, and to death. [*To the soldiers.*

Edw. Or death, or life,
Are equal to me, if I must be torn
From my Matilda. But, whate'er thy purpose,
Be speedy in thy vengeance, nor delay
The cruel work; for know, thy master comes,
William approaches—to revenge my cause.

Mor. But not to save thee.

Edw. Then farewel, Matilda,
Perhaps for ever—If we meet no more
Thou wilt remember—But I will not doubt
Thy honour, or thy love. I know thy truth;
Know thou wilt act as best becomes thy fate,
Whate'er it be, and worthy of thyself.

Mat. Of thee, my Edwin; rather say of thee.
Yes; I will copy well thy bright example;
I'll not disgrace thy love with woman's weakness,
But part without a tear. I will but stay
To tell thy tyrant brother how I hate,
How I despise him, and then follow thee.

Mor. I'll hear no more—begone!—away with him. [*Exeunt guards with* EDWIN.
For thee, Matilda——

Mat. What for me remains
I know too well; thy odious love, reproach
Unmerited, and threats which I despise.
Thou think'st I have deceived thee—think so still.
Enjoy thy error. Thou believ'st us guilty;
'Twill make thee happy now—Perchance to find
Us innocent, may be thy punishment hereafter.

Mor. Aye, 'twas a proof of innocence to fly,
Thou and thy paramour together.

Mat. No;
I scorn a thought so mean. Could I have left
My Edwin, long e'er this I might have been
Beyond the reach of tyranny; beyond
Thy hated power; and safe, beneath the wing
Of sacred majesty, in William's care.

Mor. In William's care!

Mat. Thy conqueror's—for know
The hero comes—to scatter blessings round him,
To heal his country's wounds, chastise rebellion,
And punish false perfidious slaves like thee.

Mor. By heav'ns! she braves my wrath, insults my weakness,
And triumphs o'er her slave.

Mat. There was a time,
When with an eye of pity I beheld
Thy hopeless love; when I concealed my passion
For the dear idol of my heart, because
I feared 'twould make thee wretched; but thy rage,
Thy cruel treatment of a guiltless brother,
Has cancelled all.

Mor. Then, mark me: If thou hop'st
For Edwin's freedom, shake off this vile passion;
Yield thy proud heart to him who best deserves it,
And meet me at the altar—Two hours hence

I shall expect thee there—Beyond that time
He may not live to thank thee for thy bounty.

Mat. Then let him perish—glut thy tyrant soul
With vengeance: bathe it in a brother's blood.
All ruffian, all barbarian, as thou art;
Thou canst not murder his immortal fame:
Thou canst not rob him of Matilda's love.
But know—when he, for whom alone this pulse
Would wish to beat, this lazy blood to flow
Within my veins, when he shall be no more;
Another life shall satiate thy revenge;
Another victim shall attend thy triumph.

Mor. Thou talk'st it nobly—'tis the common trick,
The affectation of thy sex, to boast
A fancied firmness, which ye never knew;
But with affrighted nature thou wouldst shrink
When death approaches.

Mat. Put me to the proof.
If thou wouldst punish Edwin, know he lives
Within this breast—strike home, and pierce him there.

Mor. Imperious woman! thou defiest my power,
And let it crush thee. If thy country bleeds
In every vein; if perjur'd Edwin falls,
As soon he shall, a victim to my rage,
Thou art the murd'rer; thou the parricide;
I stand absolved; the guilt is all thy own.

Mat. If it be guilt to suffer keen reproach,
Pain, persecution, terror, chains, and death,
For him I love, rather than stain my soul
With foul disloyalty, I am indeed
The guiltiest of my sex, and well deserve
The pangs I feel.

Mor. Thou'st driven me to the pit
Of black despair, and I will drag thee down
To share the dreadful ruin thou hast made.

Mat. I know thy savage purpose; but remember,
The hour approaches when thou shalt repent
This base, unmanly triumph. William comes:
Hear that and tremble, thou unnat'ral brother;
Nor rocks, nor caves shall hide thee from his vengeance;
Inglorious, and unpitied, shalt thou fall,
And after ages shall consign thy name
To endless scorn, and infamy immortal.
[*Exit* MATILDA.

Mor. Inexorable judge! I stand condemned,
And shall await my doom; but not alone
Or unreveng'd shall Morcar fall—henceforth
I bid adieu to Love, and all his train
Of fond delusions—Vengeance! I am thine,
And thine alone: Thou daughter of despair!
Destructive goddess! come, possess my soul
With all thy terrors—Yes; it shall be so.
A few short hours are all that niggard fate
Will deign to spare me; I'll employ 'em well,
For I will crowd into the narrow circle
A little age of misery and horror.
Ha! Siward here! what brought thee hither?

Enter SIWARD.

Siw. Pity
For the distressed. I knew thou wert unhappy,
And came, where duty called, to pour the balm
Of friendship in, and heal thy wounded heart.

Mor. O, they have pierced too deep; even thou, my friend,
Thou hast betrayed me: was it not unkind
To set my pris'ner free; to let him meet
Matilda, and conspire against my life?

Siw. Impossible! By heaven! the artful story
He told, so wrought upon my easy soul,
I thought him innocent.

Mor. Hast thou not heard—
Siw. From Harold only an imperfect tale,
So strange I could not credit it.
Mor. Alas!
'Tis all too true: I am the veriest slave,
The meanest wretch that e'er was trampled on
By an imperious woman: O my friend!
My Siward! I have nought on earth but thee:
Shouldst thou forsake me in this hour of terror!
But sure thou wilt not.
Siw. No: Whate'er the will
Of wayward Fortune may determine for us,
Behold me ready to partake thy fate.
If we must sue for peace, let Siward bear
The olive for thee: if once more we cast
The desperate die of battle, let me perish
By Morcar's side. Come, let us on together;
Shake off this load of unavailing sorrow,
And seek the field; there, if we fall, we fall
With honour: if we rise, we rise to glory.
Mor. Talk not of glory to a wretch like me,
Bereft of every hope. There was a time
When that enlivening call would have awaked
My active spirit, and this drooping heart
Bounded with joy; but my Matilda's lost:
Revenge alone——

[*Enter a messenger to* SIWARD *with letters.*

Siw. From Walstcoff these;
'Tis well—retire. [*Exit messenger.*
(*Reads*)——How's this? then all is lost.
He writes me here, that William's fame in arms,
Spite of his cruel and oppressive laws,
Hath raised him friends in every part: already
The northern rebels are dispersed, and thousands
Flock to the royal standard. To resist
Were madness.

Mor. And to yield were cowardice
More shameful——
Siw. What must we resolve on?
Mor. Death:
The wretch's only hope, the wish'd-for end
Of every care; but I would meet him clothed
In all his terrors, with his reeking spear
Dipt in the blood of an ungrateful mistress,
And a false, happy rival: Then, my Siward,
Shalt thou behold me welcome the kind stroke,
And smile in agony.
Siw. Unhappy youth!
The storm beats hard upon thee; but our fate
Will soon be fixt, for William comes to-morrow.
Mor. To-morrow! ha! then something must be done,
And quickly too. If William comes, he comes
To triumph over us: then, my Siward, who
Shall punish Edwin? who shall wed Matilda!
I cannot bear it—If thou lov'st me, Siward,
For now I mean to try thy virtue, swear
By all the powers that wait on injured honour,
Whate'er my anxious soul requests of thee,
Thou'lt not refuse it.
Siw. By the hallowed flame
Of sacred friendship, that within this breast,
Since the first hour I sealed thee for my own,
With unremitted ardour still hath glow'd,
I will not—Speak, my Morcar, here I swear
To aid thy purpose.
Mor. 'Tis enough; and now
Come near and mark me: Thou command'st the tower
Where Edwin is confined.
Siw. I do.
Mor. Methinks
It were an easy task—you understand me—

Justice is slow, and—William comes to-morrow.
Thy friendly hand——
Siw. My lord!—
Mor. Thou tremblest—Well, another time, my Siward,
We'll talk on't—shall we not? Thou mean'st to do
As thou hast promised?
Siw. Certainly.
Mor. Then speak,
And do not trifle with me.
Siw. Sure, my lord,
You cannot mean to—
Mor. Is he not a villain?
Siw. I fear he may be so.
Mor. A hypocrite.
Siw. He hath, perhaps, deceived you, and deserves—
Mor. To perish.
Siw. No; to suffer, not to die;
Or, if to perish, not by Morcar's hand,
Or Siward's—O! 'tis horrible to shed
A brother's blood—
Mor. A rival's.
Siw. Nature—
Mor. Love—
Siw. Humanity—
Mor. Matilda——
Siw. (*Aside.*) Gracious heaven!
That passion thus should root up every sense
Of good and evil in the heart of man,
And change him to—a monster!
Mor. Hence! away,
And leave me—From this moment I will herd
With the wild savage in yon leafless desert,
Nor trust to friendship—but another hand—
Siw. (*Musing.*) Ha! that alarms me—then it must be so;
And yet how far—

Mor. You pause.
Siw. I am resolved.
Mor. On what?
Siw. To serve, to honour, to—obey you.
Edwin shall ne'er disturb thy peace again.
Mor. O glorious instance of exalted friendship!
My other self, my best, my dear-lov'd Siward—
Conscience! thou busy monitor, away,
And leave me—Siward, when shall it be done?
To-night, my Siward, shall it not?
Siw. Or never.
Mor. Let me but see the proud Matilda weep;
Let me but hear the music of her groans,
And sate my soul with vengeance—For the rest,
'Tis equal all. But tell me, Siward, say,
How shall I know the bloody moment? What
Shall be the welcome signal?
Siw. When thou hear'st
The solemn curfeu sound, conclude
The business done—Farewell. When I return,
With tears of joy thou shalt my zeal commend,
And own that Siward was indeed thy friend.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Gothic Hall.

MORCAR, HAROLD.

Mor. Treason and foul rebellion in my camp!
But I was born to be for ever wretched,
The sport of Fortune. These base mutineers——
Har. Your presence on the battlements, my lord,
Dispersed 'em soon; they hang their heads in silence,
And all is peace.
Mor. (*To himself.*) It is not so within!
Would it were done, or——
Har. What, my lord?
Mor. No matter.
What urged my soldiers to rebel?
Har. 'Tis thought
The gallant captive did by secret means
Excite them to revolt.
Mor. It must be so.
By heaven! thou mak'st me happy with the tidings:
His head shall pay the forfeit.
Har. Whilst he lives
We are not safe.

Mor. No more we are, good Harold;
'Tis fit he perish—is it not? What say'st thou?
Har. Prudence demands his life to save your own.
Mor. O! thou hast given such comfort to my soul—
Har. My lord—
Mor. Be watchful: Bring me early notice
Of every motion: Go. [*Exit* HAROLD.
Or I must fall,
Or Edwin—Hence ye visionary fears;
Ye vain chimeras, hence—It is no matter:
Conscience, I heed thee not; 'tis self-defence,
Nature's first law, and I must stand acquitted.
The prudent Siward seemed to hesitate,
As if he wished, but knew not how to shun
The office. He who could behold my tortures
With all that cold tranquillity, would ne'er
Have ventured to remove them. But I've trusted
The sword of vengeance to a safer hand.
What ho! Who waits?

Enter an OFFICER.

That soldier whom thou saw'st
In private conference with me, is he gone
As I directed him?
Offi. My Lord, even now
I saw him hastening toward the tower.
Mor. 'Tis well.
When he returns conduct him to me—Stay;
If Siward comes this way, I'm not at leisure:
I will not see him. *(Starts.)* Hark! didst thou not hear
The solemn curfeu?
Offi. No, my Lord.
Mor. Not hear it?
It shocks my soul with horror—Hark! again!

Hollow and dreadful! Sure thy faculties
Are all benumbed.
Offi. Indeed, I heard it not.
Mor. Away, and leave me to myself. [*Exit* OFFICER.
Methought
I heard a voice cry—stop—it is thy brother:
We loved each other well; our early years
Were spent in mutual happiness together:
Matilda was not there—I do remember,
One day, in sportive mood, I rashly plunged
Into the rapid flood, which had well nigh
O'erwhelmed me; when the brave, the gallant Edwin,
Rushed in and saved me—Shall I, in return,
Destroy my kind preserver? Horrid thought!
Forbid it heaven! *(Pauses.)* I am myself again.
All powerful Nature! once more I am thine.
He shall not die—Who's there—

Enter an OFFICER.

My Oswald! fly,
Fly to the tower this moment, haste, and save
My brother—Some base ruffian—
Offi. If, my Lord,
You mean the noble pris'ner there, I fear
It is too late: This moment, as I passed
The citadel, I saw a mangled corpse
Drawn forth by Siward's order—
Mor. Slave, thou liest.
Away this moment, bring me better news
On peril of thy life. [*Exit* OFFICER.
Who knows but heaven,
In gracious pity, still may interpose
And save me from the guilt? It is not done;
It shall not—must not be—All's quiet yet;
I have not heard the signal. [*The bell tolls.*
Hark! he's dead:

My brother's dead—O! cover me, ye shades
Of everlasting night! Hide, if ye can,
A murtherer from himself. Ha! see, he comes:
His wounds are bleeding still; his angry eyes
Glare full upon me. Speak—what wouldst thou have?
Matilda shall be thine: He smiles and leaves me—
[*He pauses and recovers himself.*
'Twas but the error of my troubled soul,
O! guilt, guilt, guilt! [*Throws himself down.*
Here will I lay me down,
And end my days in bitterness and anguish.

Enter SIWARD.

Who's there! ha! Siward here. [*Rises.*
Speak, murtherer, speak,
Where is my brother? Villain, thou hast snared
My soul; my honour's stain'd, my fame destroyed,
And my sweet peace of mind is lost for ever.
Siw. Matilda will restore it.
Mor. Never, never,
The price of blood! No: Could Matilda bring
The vanquished world, in dowry with her charms,
I would not wed her. O! could I recal
One hasty moment, one rash, cruel act—
But 'twas thy savage hand that—
Siw. I received
Your orders: 'twas my duty to obey them.
Mor. Where slept thy friendship then? Thou know'st despair
And madness urged me to it—but for thee—
Thy callous heart had never felt the pangs,
The agonies of disappointed love;
Thou didst not know Matilda—Curs'd obedience!
How often has thy insolence opposed
Thy master and thy prince? how often dared
To thwart my will, and execute thy own:

But when I bade thee do a deed of horror,
And shed a brother's blood, thou couldst obey me.
Siw. Away! this is a trick of self-delusion,
The common cant of hypocrites, who rail
At others guilt, to mitigate their own.
I've been the mean, the servile instrument
Of thy base vengeance; but thou hadst prepared
Another, a low ruffian, to perform
The bloody office; I detest thee for it,
Despise, abhor thee.
Mor. Thou wert once my friend.
Siw. Henceforth I am thy foe—Thou hast destroyed
The best of brothers, and the best of men.
Mor. Despised by Siward—then my cup of sorrow
Is full indeed—But this shall—
[*Attempts to kill himself,* SIWARD *wrests the sword from him.*
Ha! disarm'd!
But coward guilt is weak as infancy;
It was not so before I murdered Edwin.
Siw. The murderer's punishment should be to live,
And shall be thine; thou know'st not half thy guilt,
Nor half thy sorrows: I shall rend thy soul.
Prepare thee for another, deeper wound,
And know that Edwin loved thee; in his hand,
Whilst mine was lifted up for his destruction,
I found this paper; 'tis the counterpart
Of one he had dispatched to William; read it,
And tremble at thy complicated guilt.
Mor. (Taking the paper.) What's here? He pleads my pardon with the king,
Ascribes my frantic zeal, in Edgar's cause,
To ill-advised warmth; and recommends
His—murderer to mercy: Horrid thought!

I am the vilest, most abandoned slave
That e'er disgraced humanity—O Siward!
If thou hast yet, among the dying embers
Of our long friendship, one remaining spark
Of kind compassion for the wretched Morcar,
Lend me thy aid to shake off the sad load
Of hated life, that presses sore upon me.

Siw. Though thou'rt no longer worthy of my friendship,
Deaf to the cries of Nature, and the voice
Of holy Truth, that would have counselled thee
To better deeds, yet hath my foolish heart
Some pity for thee—After crimes like these,
There is but one way left—Say, wilt thou patient wait
Till I return?

Mor. I will.

Siw. Remember, Morcar,
You promised me—I have a draught within,
Of wondrous power, that in a moment lulls
The tortured soul to sweet forgetfulness
Of all its woes; I'll haste and bring it thee;
'Twill give thee rest and peace. [*Exit* SIWARD.

Mor. I hope for ever.
But where's the lost Matilda? who shall comfort
That dear, unhappy maid, whom I have robb'd
Of every bliss. O save me from the sight,
Ye pitying powers!

Enter MATILDA.

She comes—distraction!

Mat. O!
My Lord, permit—

Mor. Away—I know thee not.

Mat. Not know me! 'tis the poor distress'd Matilda,
Who comes to ask forgiveness for the rage

Of frantic love; the madness of despair,
That urged me to such wrath and bitterness
Of keen reproach; but pardon, [*Kneels.*
Generous Morcar,
A woman's weakness: speak, and make me blest.
Alas! he hears me not.
Mor. Matilda, rise;
I pray thee leave me. [*Weeps.*
Mat. Gracious heaven! he weeps;
Propitious omen! O my Lord! those tears
Are the soft marks of sympathizing woe,
And seem to say, I shall not plead in vain.
Mor. Ask what thou wilt, for know, so dear I hold
Matilda's happiness, that here I swear,
If all the kingdoms of the peopled earth
Were mine to give, I'd lay them at her feet;
But much I fear they would not make her happy.
Mat. Alas! my Lord, Matilda's happiness
Is center'd all in one dear precious jewel;
'Tis in thy keeping—Edwin—
Mor. What of him?
Mat. Is innocent.
Mor. I know it.
Mat. Just and good;
He never meant to injure thee; indeed
He did not.
Mor. I believe it; for his nature
Was ever mild and gentle.
Mat. Good my Lord,
You mock me.
Mor. No, Matilda; speak, go on,
And praise him: I could talk to thee for ever
Of Edwin's virtues—
Mat. Then thou wouldst not hurt
His precious life, thou wouldst not—
Mor. I would give
A thousand worlds to save him.

Mat. Wouldst thou? then
My prayers are heard, thou hast forgiven all,
And I am happy. Speak, is Edwin free?
Mor. From every care—would I were half so blest!
Mat. What mean you? Ha! thy eyes are fixt with horror,
Thy looks are wild. What hast thou done? O! speak.
Mor. Matilda, if thou com'st for Edwin's life,
It is too late—for Edwin is no more.
Mat. And is my Edwin slain?
Mor. Aye: Basely murder'd.
O! 'twas the vilest, most unnat'ral deed
That ever—
Mat. Blasted be the cruel hand
That dealt the blow! O, may his guilty heart
Ne'er taste of balmy peace, or sweet repose!
Mor. But ever, by the vulture conscience torn,
Bleed inward, still unpitied, till he seek
For refuge in the grave.
Mat. Nor find it there.
Mor. 'Tis well: Thy curses are accomplished all;
I feel 'em here within—for know—'twas I.
I gave the fatal order, and my friend,
My Siward, has too faithfully performed it.
Mat. Siward! impossible! There dwells not then,
In human breast, or truth or virtue—O!
Unnatural brother!—but I will be calm.
Mor. Alas! thy fate is happiness to mine;
For thou art innocent.
Mat. And soon, I hope
To be rewarded for it. O! my Edwin,
Matilda soon shall follow thee—thou think'st
I am unarmed, deserted, doomed like thee
To hated life; but know, I have a friend,

A bosom-friend, and prompt, as thine, to enter
On any bloody service I command.
[*Draws a dagger.*
Mor. Command it then for justice, for revenge,
Behold! my bosom rises to the blow;
Strike here, and end a wretched murderer.—
Mat. No;
That were a mercy thou hast not deserv'd;
I shall not seek revenge in Morcar's death,
In mine thou shalt be wretched.—
[*Attempts to stab herself;* MORCAR *lays hold of the dagger.*
Mor. Stop, Matilda—
Stop thy rash hand; the weight of Edwin's blood
Sits heavy on my heart. O! do not pierce it
With added guilt.
Mat. No more, I must be gone
To meet my Edwin, who already chides
My lingering steps, and beckons me away.
Mor. Yet hear me! O! if penitence and prayer,
If deep contrition, sorrow, and remorse,
Could bring him back to thy desiring eyes,
O! with what rapture would I yield him now
To thee, Matilda—bear me witness—Ha! [*Starts.*
'Tis he—Look up, dear injured maid—he comes
To claim my promise
Mat. It is, it is my Edwin!

Enter SIWARD *and* EDWIN: EDWIN *runs and embraces* MATILDA.

Mor. O unexpected bliss! what gracious hand—
Siw. Behold the cordial draught I promised you!
I knew thy noble nature, when the storm
Of passion had subsided, would abhor
A deed so impious—'Tis the only time
That Siward ever did deceive his friend.
Canst thou forgive?

Mor. Forgive thee! O thou art
My guardian angel, sent by gracious heaven
To save me from perdition. O my brother!
I blush to stand before thee—wilt thou take
From these polluted hands one precious gift?
'Twill make thee full amends for all thy wrongs.
Accept her, and be happy.

[*He joins the hands of* EDWIN *and* MATILDA; *then, turning to* SIWARD.

That vile slave
Whom I employed—

Siw. I guessed his horrid purpose,
Watched every step, and as the villain aimed
His poniard at the guiltless Edwin's breast,
Turned sudden round, and plunged it in his own.
The bloody corse was dragged—

Mor. I know the rest.
O Siward! from what weight of endless woe
Hath thy blest hand preserved me!

Edw. O my Matilda! how shall we repay
Our noble benefactor? Much I owe
To gallant Siward, but to Morcar more:
Thou gav'st me life, but my kind, generous brother
Enhanced the gift, and blessed me with Matilda.

Mat. (*To* MORCAR.) Words are too poor to thank
thee as I ought;
Accept this tribute of a grateful heart,
These tears of joy; and, O! may every curse
My frantic grief for Edwin poured upon thee,
Be changed to dearest blessings on thy head!

Mor. Alas! thy blessings cannot reach me. Guilt
May plead for pardon, but can never boast
A claim to happiness: I only ask
A late forgiveness. If a life of sorrow,
And deep remorse, can wash my crimes away,
Let 'em be buried with me in oblivion,

And do not curse the memory of Morcar.

[*Turning to* EDWIN.

O Edwin! say, canst thou forgive the crime
Of frantic love, of madness and despair?

Edw. As in my latest hour from heaven I hope
Its kind indulgence for my errors past,
Even so, my brother, from my soul I pardon
And pity thee.

Mor. Then I shall die in peace.

Edw. Talk not of death, my brother, thou must live
To see our happiness complete, to hear
My sweet Matilda pour forth all her heart
In rapturous thanks to thee, and to thy friend;
And grateful Edwin bless thee for thy bounties.

Mor. It must not be: I know too much already
Of Morcar's weakness, and Matilda's power;
They are not to be trusted. No, my Edwin,
Morcar shall never interrupt thy joys.
Far from thy sight, and from the haunts of men,
In some deep distant solitude retired,
To pious sorrow will I dedicate
My short remains of wretched life, and strive
To make my peace with heaven and wronged Matilda.

And if perchance in after times some bard,
Struck with the native horrors of my tale,
Should bid the historic muse record it—let him,
By my example, teach a future age
The dire effects of loose, unbridled rage;
Teach thoughtless men their passions to controul,
And curb the sallies of the impetuous soul,
Lest they experience worse than Morcar's woe,
Nor find a Siward—to prevent the blow.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS;

A

TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

BY THE

HON. JOHN ST JOHN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Duke of Norfolk,	*Mr Kemble.*
Sir William Cecil,	*Mr Aikin.*
Lord Herries,	*Mr Barrymore.*
Davison,	*Mr Parker.*
Earl of Shrewsbury,	*Mr Benson.*
Earl of Huntingdon,	*Mr Phillimore.*
Sir Amias Paulet,	*Mr Fawcett.*
Beton,	*Mr Williams.*
Nawe,	*Mr Alfred.*
Lieutenant of the Tower,	*Mr Lyons.*
Sheriff,	*Mr Chaplin.*
Queen Mary,	*Mrs Siddons.*
Queen Elizabeth,	*Mrs Ward.*
Lady Douglas,	*Mrs Farmer.*
Lady Scrope,	*Miss Tidswell.*

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The Gateway of Bolton Castle.

Enter BETON, *who perceives* LORD HERRIES *arriving.*

Bet. Sure 'tis Lord Herries! O my noble friend!
How have we daily prayed for your return!
Your royal mistress, from yon turret's height,
By hourly watch, hath strained her beauteous eyes,
Till gushing tears o'erwhelmed her sight.—But say,
What tidings bring you from the English court?

L. Her. Beton! if faith and zeal in a good cause
Could have secured success, it had been thine;
Your claim of simple audience for a queen
Was founded on a royal pledge. The ring
Which graced your embassy was sent with vows
To Mary from Elizabeth, that she would aid

Her royal sister's cause—But, O good Beton!
It needs not our experience to foresee
The gulf 'twixt vows and their accomplishment.
Bet. But the result?
L. Her. Evasions and chicane;
Base terms propos'd; then treacherous advice
That Mary should in policy submit
To this strange trial; heaven forbid! until
She's heard in person.
Bet. Still deny her presence?
Still urge these poor pretences! Grant our queen
Were liable to imputations—Grant
Whate'er hate, envy list—'twill but enforce
Her claim to face the accuser.
L. Her. I shall entreat
Permission to revoke this rash appeal.
Bet. Would it were done! Our country is debased!
While our anointed queen submits her cause
To foreign jurisdiction, and betrays
At once her own and Scotland's dignity.
L. Her. Thus shall I urge; you know her spirit well;
Touch but that string, 'twill vibrate o'er her frame;
She has a soul that wakes at Honour's voice;
Alive, with eager trembling at the sound,
She flies to its embrace; let Shame approach!
Straight she recoils, and shrinks within herself;
No plant so sensitive, no shade so fleet.
May heav'n still guard her! which way is the queen?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Hall in Bolton Castle.

Enter LADY SCROPE, *meeting* LADY DOUGLAS.

L. Scr. How fares my royal guest this morn, sweet maid?
You meet me on my accustomed daily course
To attend your queen, and wait her high commands.
L. Doug. My gentle Lady Scrope, you are too kind;
Such courteous words but ill besuit the state
Of my poor fallen mistress—Rather say,
Is she secure? Who guards the castle gates?
Is every arrow-slit and loop-hole watched?
L. Scr. Tax me not, Douglas! with severity—
L. Doug. 'Tis but your duty, which you exercise
With tender feeling, and more true respect
Than those at first deputed to receive her
With all the forms and pomp of royal state.
For, O! what aggravating mockery!
Bows, smiles, and court-like phrases never sooth
The pangs of princes in imprisonment.
But your high mind would scorn to pay base court
By acts of rigour on the wretched.
L. Scr. Yes!
I know too well the dues of sovereignty:
While she is with me, under the Lord Scrope's roof,
His wife, and Norfolk's sister, ne'er shall hear
A queen's complaints with cold indifference.

L. Doug. O, nobly spoken! worthy your great birth!
O! how your sentiments and voice recal
Your brother's image! would he now were here
For my poor mistress' sake—But see she comes.

Enter MARY.

L. Scr. May health and comfort to your majesty
Return with this propitious morn!
Q. Mary. Alas!
My noble hostess, your civility,
Touches a grateful mind more pointedly—
Is more affecting—melts my spirits more
Than a less kind reception could have done.
You owe not me this visit; for I came
In strict obedience to your queen's high will,
Under a promise from her royal self
That she would meet me ere I should arrive;
But in her place, behold! she sends her guards
To do me honour—O, my faithful maid!
You've seen me travel with a prouder suit,
When all the gallant youth of France pressed on,
Led forward by the princes of Lorrain,
Striving who foremost should escort their queen
From Paris to the sea—The gorgeous train,
Sweeping along the plains of Picardy,
Like some bright comet in its pathless course,
Illumined all the country as it passed:
But what avail these thoughts? for other scenes
I must behold—Yet, truly, this fair seat
Might well befit a royal residence,
And suits my fancy—but that I perceive
Some features in it which awake my mind
To strange misgivings—Wherefore, Lady Scrope,
Do centinels surround the battlements?
L. Scr. Madam, be not alarmed; and rest assured

All comforts, honours, free access of friends,
And every privilege that can assuage
Misfortune, shall be found within these walls.
Seek then no rescue, nor attempt a flight.

Q. Mary. Flight! said you, lady Scrope? I must not fly?
Then there's no farther doubt—Ah! 'tis too plain!
I'm in confinement here! a prisoner!
O horrid word! O monstrous perfidy!
O perjured, false Elizabeth! Is this
The faith of England? these the plighted vows
Of queen to queen? the bond of sisterhood,
And sacred rights of hospitality?
If justice has not fled the earth and skies,
Requite it, heaven! O my kind keeper, now
No more my hostess; you are merciful;
Your kind indulgence mitigates my lot;
Softens and blunts the sharp edge of that hour,
The painful but short hour, that goes between
The imprisonment of princes and their end:
You did assure me I should see my friends;
Your brother Norfolk is my dearest friend.
Shall I?—

Enter HERRIES.

L. Scr. Here's one to put me to the proof—
Heaven knows the issue! we'll retire and pray
For peace and concord, amity and love.

[*Exeunt* LADY SCROPE *and* LADY DOUGLAS.

Q. Mary. Herries, my friend! companion of my flight!
Best counsellor who bade me shun this land,
What answer have you brought from this proud queen?

L. Her. This is the purport: England's queen declares,
That, as a friend, and not a judge, she hears

This cause. Your restoration to achieve
If you renounce all title to her crown,
During her life and issue—give up France;
Ally yourself with her; renounce the mass.

Q. Mary. Heavens, what a height of insolence is this!
I see her aim: and now, no more than this—
Will she in person hear her sister queen?

L. Her. She still declines to see you, till you are cleared
Of this foul charge; which she herself abets,
Basely suborning forgeries; mean time,
Full of professions of sincerest love,
She waits impatient to embrace with joy
Her vindicated sister—But till then,
Most sanctimoniously abhors the sight
Of one whose honour she herself betrays
By her false calumnies.

Q. Mary. Perfidious wretch!

L. Her. Know you that Murray, your base brother, dwells
At England's court, consulted, closeted;
While you, a queen, her equal in all points,
Are in a vile durance—

Q. Mary. Grant me patience, heaven!

L. Her. Were he your equal, why this preference
To him who should plead guilty, not accuse?

Q. Mary. 'Tis all mere mockery and artifice
To cheat the world, and gain its confidence
By semblance of fair justice.

L. Her. Rather say
Plain, undisguis'd injustice: might I speak,
Your majesty should arrogate your right,
As a supreme and independent queen.

Q. Mary. And yet, my trusty guide, can I recede;

Decline the inquiry; scorn the public voice;
Leave the licentious world to its own thoughts,
And my fair fame, a prey to wild conjecture?

L. Her. The world's more just than to expect a queen
To plead to vassals in a foreign land;
Hold up her hand, and bend her knee to those
Whose proudest head, at sight of her approach,
Should prostrate fall, and humbly kiss the dust.

Q. Mary. And yet what other clearance can I have?
Shall I sit down under this heavy load?
Shall conscious innocence reject the means
Of wiping off this stain? No! I'll resign
All, but the first of titles, a fair name.

L. Her. 'Tis not yourself, but Scotland you betray;
Rights of a sovereign realm, transmitted through
A hundred kings; rights which yourself were borne,
And which you've sworn to uphold.

Q. Mary. Truth will prevail;
Herries! you may return to England's queen:
Tell her I here recal my late appeal,
As all beneath my name and dignity.
Tell her I came invited to this land
By her fair words, and sought a refuge here;
That refuge is a prison—then repeat
My wish in person to submit my cause;
(Wherein I show her honour and respect
Exceeding all example). If, at last,
This woman, so forgetful of herself,
Deaf to the claims of blood and royalty,
Against a sister shall make fast the door,
Admitting her accuser: let her know,
The queen of Scotland claims her liberty;
Demands her birthright; nor will e'er resign
That freedom Heaven and Nature gave to all.
If this just suit's denied, defy her then;

Challenge her worst; dare her to keep me here;
Bid her unhinge, and set at naught the laws
Of Nature and of Nations; let her pride
Exult in barbarous disregard of right,
And emulate the unlettered Turk and Moor,
Till in one common cause, and with one voice,
All Christendom shall rise to rescue me.

[*Exit* HERRIES.

Enter NORFOLK.

D. Nor. Pardon this bold intrusion of your slave,
Whose steps are guided by resistless charms,
And every sentiment that purest love
Breathes in the hearts of her true votaries.

Q. Mary. Are you then come, brave, generous man! My joy,
Norfolk, at sight of thee, dispels my fears:
Yet were it known you sought my presence here—

D. Nor. Is it then treason to approach these walls?
Must I presume your guilt, who, through this veil,
See your bright innocence?

Q. Mary. Heaven knows 'tis such;
But circumvented thus by perjuries,
By bold bad men, what can a woman hope,
A helpless, unbefriended exile?

D. Nor. O!
Canst thou pronounce those words, and look on me?

Q. Mary. No! thou didst guard me from the impending wrath
Of Murray, that inhuman enemy.
O! thou hast lavished unrequited aid,
Most angel-like!—Now first I feel my loss:
The fall of power ne'er wounds the breast so deep,
As when, from hearts who swell with gratitude,
It severs all the means of recompence.

D. Nor. What do I hear? No means of recompence?
Why, what reward can heaven? a beauteous queen,
The paragon and envy of her sex,
The wonder and delight of all mankind;
Sent from the skies to dazzle all below
With rays too bright for mortal sight to bear.

Q. Mary. Terms such as these apply not to a wretch,
A poor, unfortunate, degraded wretch,
Doomed to captivity.

D. Nor. Captivity!
It cannot, must not, shall not be; such acts
Are not within the reach of Envy's grasp:
Cold-blooded tyrants may conceive such thoughts;
But, trust me, mankind is not yet so lost
To honour, decency, and generous love;
The manners of the age, the face of things,
Would not endure to see the pride of the age,
And all the living beauty of the world,
Led like a sacrifice to night and hell,
And buried quick—nay, in the bloom of youth;
And such a bloom as blasts the blushing rose
Of England's maids so famed—a form that mars
All other claim to grace or dignity.

Q. Mary. You mock me, sure! Alas, what would these flights?

D. Nor. Yourself, and this fair hand; here on this earth
I ask, in one rash prayer, all heaven can grant.
[*Kneeling.*

Q. Mary. Let not despair or confidence take place,
Where fickle Fortune reigns.

D. Nor. O, joyful words!
I am not to despair; hence, hence, I date
All joys of life, and flattering hopes to come;

And dedicate all honour, service, love,
Henceforth, unto the mistress of my soul.

Q. Mary. Another mistress claims thy services,
A proud, inquisitive, revengeful queen;
One full of envy; doomed through life to feed
On gall and spleen; nor taste love's generous draught.
Watchful she is, and jealous in the extreme:
Beware how she's inform'd!

D. Nor. Why should we fear?
Her ministers approve; proud Leicester's self,
Her favourite, will procure her full consent.

Q. Mary. Great minds are unsuspicious to their ruin;
Trust not to Leicester's words—Nor dream that she
Will loose these chains, and fasten Hymen's bands,
For one she hates, fears, views with envious eyes.
Will she, so wise, join me to all your power?
It cannot be; prepare then for the worst;
And, if we fail, and I remain a slave,
Perhaps in faster chains, they shall but add
Fresh rivets to our love—This token keep!
[*Delivering a token.*
If closer walls await me, this may serve
To instruct some faithful servant of your name,
And of my wish for your access—Adieu!

D. Nor. Farewell, thou pattern of all excellence!
[*Exit* NORFOLK.

Q. Mary. (*Sola.*) Now, heavens! as you regard our mortal cares,
If innocence claims mercy in your sight,
Expand your guardian wings, and cover me
From this black storm! avert the dire approach
Of this too subtle serpent's crooked pace,
That glides to my destruction! How have I
Deserved her venom? Is it that I am young?
Born to one crown, and married to another?

Or that, in me, she sees with jaundiced eyes
Her lineal successor? Aye! there's the crime
Meanness cannot forgive—Poor narrow soul!
That wanting courage to submit to fate,
Seeks, like her father, to perpetuate
A mortal throne, and reign when she's no more:
There's no distemper so incurable
As thirst of power—Here then for life I'm fixed,
Unless I work my way through walls of stone.—
Alas! these hands are weak! But I'll find some
Shall tear up by the roots these thick-ribb'd towers;
I'll from my dungeon scream, till to my cries
All Europe echoes—Norfolk! thou shalt rouse
That insuppressive spirit of this isle,
Which hates injustice, succours innocence,
Appals the tyrant, and protects the oppressed.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Whitehall.

ELIZABETH *seated on her Throne, attended by her Court and Guards.*

Enter CECIL.

Q. Eliz. Cecil, your haste tells me you bring advice
Of the result of this day's conference
On Mary's cause.

Sir W. Cec. My liege, the conference
By Norfolk, your own delegate, this hour
Is suddenly dissolved. The partial duke,
When Herries claimed an audience for his queen,
Dismissed the court, and justified the claim.

Q. Eliz. Mary will never be in want of friends,
While Norfolk lives.

Sir W. Cec. And how long that may be,
I know not! but can never wish long life
To England's foes.—

Q. Eliz. Of Norfolk say you that?

Sir W. Cec. Not as a charge direct of any crime

Within the grasp of law; but when a duke,
So highly honoured by his queen, shall plot
In state affairs—

Q. Eliz. What mean these hints? Explain.
[*Descending from her Throne.*

Sir W. Cec. The duke arrives from Bolton, the Lord Scrope's.

Q. Eliz. Indeed! I own the visit was ill timed.

Sir W. Cec. Or flowed it purely from fraternal love?

Q. Eliz. Why, Cecil, you delight in dark surmise!
Norfolk's an open, undesigning man;
His friendships and dislikes are all avowed.

Sir W. Cec. Soft clay takes deep impression—flexible
To any shape, is moulded easily;
And facile, honest minds, when caught by love,
Exchange their native qualities for those
Which suit their new designs—

Q. Eliz. Speak you of love?

Sir W. Cec. Aye, mutual, in all its forms declared;
Close correspondence.

Q. Eliz. O, accursed news!
O, all-seducing harlot!—Wanton wretch!
Can none escape the fascinating looks
Of this attracting basilisk? must she—
Cecil! this instant issue my commands
For closer custody; seek Shrewsbury;
Tell him to take her from the Lady Scrope,
Her Norfolk's sister, and from Bolton, straight
Proceed to Tutbury's strong fortress: there
Let her be guarded safe—begone—no stop—
Cecil, be sure you do not trifle here.
I would not have your wary character
Blemished, by joining in the babbling cry

Of every politic officious knave,
Seeking reward for premature reports:—
What proof have you of this?

Sir W. Cec. Ere long complete;
Till then, my faithful word; but let not haste
Mar the discovery—Plots there are besides
Of blacker die, not flowing from the duke,
But from the restless spirit of the church,
Whose midnight conclave, brooding in the dark,
Devises stratagems and massacres
For those who break her fetters.

Q. Eliz. Now dispatch,
Use all your zeal—forget not Shrewsbury.

[*Exit* CECIL.

(*Sola.*) The events begin to multiply, which tend
All to my point—This close imprisonment
Will now be sanctified in people's eyes.
I'll spread the fame of this conspiracy;
But for the Duke's intrigue there needs no haste;
As yet 'tis in the bud, and may lie hid
Till farther light shall ripen and expand
Its native colours.—Here he comes at length.

Enter NORFOLK.

D. Nor. I fear I'm come full late; though not the last
In love and duty to my gracious queen.

Q. Eliz. My Lord, we know your fame for loyalty;
For honour, justice, generosity;
We think ourselves have not been wanting yet,
In owning and rewarding your deserts;
Nor can we doubt your faith and gratitude.

D. Nor. Forbid it, heaven! that there should be just cause!

Q. Eliz. Norfolk, you are our first commissioner.

D. Nor. As such, I trust, I've not disgraced my charge,
Or England's justice.

Q. Eliz. You are not accus'd;
Think not we wish for blind subserviency
In the exercise of such a trust; but say
Frankly, what colour wears this wondrous cause?

D. Nor. On Mary's side, fair as her beauteous front.

Q. Eliz. How! to my face? [*Aside.*
My Lord, you never speak
But from the heart; such frankness pleases me,
And much becomes your family and name;
Which, in good truth, I wish were well secur'd
In the right line; your noble wife, my Lord,
Hath lately left us to lament her loss;
You should repair it: who would not be proud
To boast of Norfolk's heart? Why not aspire
To ask a royal hand?—The queen of Scots
Is not, I guess, displeasing in your sight.

D. Nor. Aspire to gain the queen of Scots! shall I,
So highly countenanced by your good grace,
Court one in bondage, fallen, and accused?

Q. Eliz. Is, then, a diadem so small a prize?

D. Nor. Pardon me, madam, if I have no wish
To wed a prisoner.—Gods, when I reflect
On all the comforts I enjoy at home,
How can I wish to seek a land of strife;
And purchase, at the price of wealth and ease,
A barren sceptre and a fruitless crown?

Q. Eliz. Then England boasts a peer who scorns the match?

D. Nor. Such are the gifts of bounteous Providence,
Such my condition in my native land,
That when surrounded by the numerous throng

Of my retainers, at my plenteous board,
Or in the crowded field at country sports,
I, your liege subject, sometimes rate myself
As high as many princes.—

Enter DAVISON.

Dav. Madam, I come
From the Earl of Leicester, who, by illness seiz'd,
Despairs of life, yet frequently repeats
Your royal name, and seems as if he wished
To impart some weighty matter.—

Q. Eliz. Say I'll come. [*Exit* DAV.
(*Aside.*) So Leicester has some secret to divulge
Upon his death-bed, though I trust to heaven
He doth not yet upon his death-bed lie!—
(*Addressed to* NORFOLK.) And on what pillow Norfolk lays his head,
Let him beware!— [*Exit* ELIZ.

D. Nor. (*Solus.*) What may this caution mean?
Beware what pillow! ha! why, more is meant:
I mark'd her cold, dry looks, her pregnant sneers;
All is not well—surely she has not heard—
She has, and I'm undone—all confidence,
All faith is rotten—Leicester is my friend;
But who knows what in sickness he'll confess?
Somehow I am betrayed: 'Tis Cecil sure;
The prying, penetrating Cecil, aye!
He at a glance views all this busy world,
And reads our very hearts. I'll to him straight.
[*Exit* NORFOLK.

SCENE II.

Enter CECIL, *meeting Lord* HERRIES *in haste.*

Sir W. Cec. Whither so fast, my Lord?
L. Her. No matter, sir,
If far from regions whence all faith is flown,
All reverence to royal rights—
Sir W. Cec. How's this?
L. Her. England's no more a civiliz'd estate;
The savage Afric tyrant may expose
His subject's liberty to public sale,
Seize, bind, and sell the human race like beasts,
Mow down their heads like thistles in the path;
He is untutored; yet not more than you,
Barbarian, reckless of all faith and law.
Sir W. Cec. What breach of law? what wrongful judgment's this?
L. Her. None: for you cannot, dare not judge our queen.
Why is she then detained? Curse on this land
And all its savage race; your cursed shores,
Placed like a trap to intercept the course
And passage of the sea, had well nigh caught
My mistress on her way; Henceforth what sail
Will not, through rocks and sands, avoid your coast?
Soon as the mariner shall from afar
Descry your hated cliffs, though spent with toil,
Consumed with sickness, and distressed for food,
He'll turn his leaky vessel, and escape
The seat of treacherous Circe's cruel reign.

Yet, ere I go, mark this, the hour's at hand
When foreign vengeance shall dismay your isle,
Scare all its coasts, and make its centre shake
At sight of such a buoyant armament,
As never pressed the bosom of the main.
Beware! [*Exit* HERRIES.

Sir W. Cec. (Solus.) Aye; and in spite of thee, proud Scot!
Let Scotland, France, and Spain blow up the storm,
I'll weather it, if no sinister wind,
No inland gust, o'erset me suddenly:
Mary's secure; and Norfolk's shallow brains
Are wrapt in dreams of vanity and love;
His plots I find have yet no farther scope.
[*Exit* CECIL.

SCENE III.

ELIZABETH *entering her chamber with the* LIEUTENANT *of the Tower.*

Q. Eliz. Lieutenant, now you've had your orders, haste!

Lieut. The duke is still below—I'll guard him well. [*Exit.* LIEUT.

Q. Eliz. (*Sola.*) So! this design is riper than I thought:
Leicester informs me that the contract's signed.
The Tower is now the fittest residence
For this intriguing Lord, who thinks to mix
The statesman's and the lover's part unseen.

Enter CECIL, *throwing himself at* ELIZABETH'S *feet.*

Sir W. Cec. Most gracious queen! thus at your royal feet
I crave a boon. E'en as I entered now,
The Duke was seized; O, yet suspend your wrath!

Q. Eliz. Can Cecil plead for Norfolk? Rise! and say,
What means this double aspect? this quick change?
This aguish heat and cold? your steady mind,
Which used to point the safest road, now veers,
Turns, like the shifting vane, at every blast.

Sir W. Cec. When have these eyes e'er viewed your enemies
But with an even, stedfast look of hate?

Q. Eliz. Why, Cecil! are not all the Catholics
United in this cause? the ambassadors
Of France and Spain haunt me from morn to night
With their petitions for this captive queen.

Sir W. Cec. Yet Norfolk's neither Catholic nor foe;
Vouchsafe to hear him!——

Q. Eliz. Since you are so prompt
In his defence;—who waits? [*Enter Attendant.*
Call in the Duke. [*Exit Attendant.*

Sir W. Cec. Had he designs against your government
I ne'er had sued for him; but he, poor dupe!
Intent on his vain-glorious enterprise,
Aimed at no farther harm: and to be plain,
He is so popular, that 'tis not safe
To keep his person long in custody—
But here he comes.

Enter NORFOLK, *throwing himself at* ELIZABETH'S *feet.*

D. Nor. My Mistress! O my queen!

Here let me, prostrate on this ground, assert
My faith and loyalty!

Q. Eliz. You may arise;
'Tis done already; honest Cecil proved
Your plots were not designed against ourselves.

D. Nor. Though justice is of right, yet he who feels
Not thankful for't, betrays a narrow mind,
Forgets the general pravity of man,
Nor prizes virtues for their rarity.

Q. Eliz. Norfolk, attend! this caution now remains;
What falls from high should deep impression make;
Beware how you take part in Mary's cause!
Remember this forgiveness, and engage,
That henceforth you'll give over these attempts.

D. Nor. This act of justice claims my solemn vow.

Q. Eliz. Cecil, attend us—— [*Exit.* ELIZ.

Sir W. Cec. Norfolk, this escape
Should serve to warn you from this idle chase:
Now seek some other fair—take her to wife;
Fly not at game so high; the falcon's safe
Who for the lesser quarry scuds the plain,
But if he's struck, towering to chase the hern,
He falls, to rise no more. [*Exit* CECIL.

D. Nor. (*Solus.*) So! this wise man
Thus condescends to waste his thoughts on me!
Advice is easier given than pursued.
It is no trifling task to quit at once
All that makes life engaging, all I love!
What have I promised? Heavens, I dread to think!
Yet it must be! for when did Norfolk e'er
Infringe his word? Nay, to his queen, his kind
Indulgent mistress—What! for mercy sue,
And break the fair conditions of the grant?

The very thought's a crime—Nature may change;
All creatures may their elements forsake;
The universe dissolve and burst its bonds;
Time may engender contrarieties,
And bring forth miracles—but none like this,
That I should break my word—I'll to my love,
Lament our fate, and take my last farewell.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

Before Tutbury Castle.

Enter the EARL *of* SHREWSBURY *and* BETON.

Bet. I am charged with royal thanks to Shrewsbury
For his humanity and gentleness.
E. Shr. Alas, good Beton! 'tis a grievous task
Thus to confine a queen. Humanity,
Where 'tis so due, claims less acknowledgment.
I am enjoined to keep her close, because
The neighbourhood abounds with Catholics.
I was in search of Bagot, the high sheriff,
With orders on that point.
Bet. I learn from him
That the Earl of Huntingdon will soon arrive;
I fear his surly, proud, imperious mind
Will bring no comfort to my mistress here.
E. Shr. You know he claims succession to the crown
Before the queen of Scots: this strange conceit
May swell his native pride and violence
With envious malice; but I'll temper it

By all the indulgences and gentle means
Our rigid orders suffer. Now farewell.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Tutbury Castle, MARY'S *chamber*—MARY *and* LADY DOUGLAS *discovered.*

Q. Mary. No, not another tear! our fate's decreed;
Our lot is cast; here in this sad abode,
E'en here, we may enjoy a dread repose—
Better by far than the tumultuous throbs
Of my poor aching heart, while yet it dreamt
Of liberty, and visionary crowns,
Whene'er I slumbered, mocked my troubled sight.
Here then, at last, in these dark, silent dens,
We shall be proof against anxiety,
And feverous Expectation's agonies.

L. Doug. My royal mistress, still there is hope, though this
May seem the mansion of despair; so cold,
So comfortless, and fit for scenes of woe;
Such deep, low, winding vaults; such towers aloft
Impending o'er their base, like broken cliffs,
Whose shapeless, weather-beaten summits hang
In rude excrescence, threatening instant fall:
Perhaps, in each of them, some wretch, pent up,
Lives here suspended between heaven and earth.

Q. Mary. I like these dismal cells; this awful gloom's
Congenial to my soul—each yawning cave
Looks like the entrance to the shades of death,
And promises oblivion of this world.
Rude as this castle is, here held his state

Old John of Gaunt; hither flocked all the pride
Of chivalry; around the lists sat all
The beauties of the court; each knight in arms,
Intent to catch a glance from some bright eye,
Exulting in her champion's victory:
Our eyes are now to other uses doomed;
To read and weep by turns—Alas, my dear!
Your pretty eyes are far too young and bright
To waste their lustre on these sights of woe.

L. Doug. Lose not a thought on me! while I behold
My royal mistress' face, my heart's at rest:
Not all the gaieties and bravery,
Which once you say these walls were witness to,
Have charms for me; 'tis all I ask, to sit,
Long, wintry, sleepless nights, and cheer awhile
The heavy hours that hang around your head.

Q. Mary. Heavens! how have I deserved such kindness? No!
This must not be; you must depart, my girl;
Fly quickly, shun this seat of wretchedness;
For else, who knows but you may be involved
In that sad fate which hourly threatens me?
O! 'tis a sorry sight to see thee sit
At meals with me, who never can insure
One morsel at our scanty board from fear
Of deadly poison: fly ere 'tis too late;
The prelude of imprisonment is short;
Soon, very soon, we must expect to hear
The assassin's wary step, fixed on his point,
Yet trembling still with horror and remorse
And faultering in the deed——Ah! who comes here?

Enter SHREWSBURY.

E. Shr. Madam! it grieves me that my presence here

Should give you such alarm; I hoped, that if
In any point I varied from my trust,
'Twas not in cruelty.
Q. Mary. O, no, my Lord!
Far otherwise; 'twas somewhat else, indeed;
Perhaps an idle fear, at least while you
Continue in your charge.
E. Shr. If I remain—
Q. Mary. Why, there's no doubt, I hope?
E. Shr. None: but report
Now adds the name of Huntingdon.
Q. Mary. Alas!
Why is that monster sent? Are there no racks
Or torturing engines made to plague mankind?
No! I defy all art to find a tool
So fit for her ingenious cruelty;
The sharpest instruments which tyrants use
Can ne'er impart such pain, as the blunt edge
Of that unpolished fool's impertinence.
E. Shr. I shall not fail to enforce all due respect.
Q. Mary. 'Tis vain to preach civility to brutes.
These tidings quite oppress my sinking soul.
Now I've no comfort left; my Douglas! now
You and I shall no longer sit all day,
Consoling one another's miseries,
Telling old stories, to beguile the time,
Of things that passed, when I was queen, and you
The brightest jewel in my court.
L. Doug. Indeed
We have a kind of melancholy joy
Indulging in our grief.
E. Shr. For that, alas!
I bring fresh food.
Q. Mary. How so?
E. Shr. This hour I learn
A strange account of some conspiracy
Detected at Whitehall; wherein your name

Was joined with Norfolk's, who, with other Lords,
Stands now committed to the Tower.

Q. Mary. Ha, me!
Merciful Heaven! What say'st thou, Shrewsbury?
Is Norfolk in the Tower on my account?
Recal those words! O, they shot through my brain
Like lightning! Say you do not believe them, man!
Speak, prythee! O, you hesitate! I'm lost!
He's gone! I see the cruel lioness
Has seized the noble hart; he bleeds beneath
Her horrid fangs. [*Leaning on* LADY DOUGLAS.

L. Doug. Alas! her memory fails?
Excuse this transient weakness, sir, in one
So cruelly oppressed, and made the sport
Of cross and wayward fortune.

E. Shr. Why this haste?

Enter NAWE *hastily.*

Nawe. This moment brings a messenger, who tells
That Norfolk, Pembroke, Lumley, Arundel,
Each to his several dungeon was confined
For Norfolk's treason; that, on farther proof,
The Duke was cleared; who now, restored to grace
Lives in full splendour, fame, and liberty.

E. Shr. Look to the queen! she faints.

[*Here* MARY, *having changed from horror to joy, faints, and falls into* LADY DOUGLAS'S *arms.*

L. Doug. Help! help!

E. Shr. Who waits?

Enter MARY'S *attendants.*

Convey her softly: Thus, alas! she's dead.

[*They carry her to a couch,*

L. Doug. My mistress! O my mistress! O my queen!
She breathes! she breathes! yet there is life, O heav'ns!
E. Shr. Patience awhile!
L. Doug. Be silent all, I pray!
Her troubled spirit must not be disturbed;
These shocks have stopped the current of her blood;
And nature seeks a momentary pause:
Excessive joy succeeding grief so quick
Now o'erwhelms her mind; but balmy sleep,
With tears that make the drowning tide to ebb,
Will ease the load that weighs upon her heart.
E. Shr. Give her repose a while, and watch her well.

[*Exeunt, leaving* MARY *asleep, surrounded by* LADY DOUGLAS *and her maids.*

SCENE III.

Before Tutbury Castle.

Enter BETON *and* NAWE.

Nawe. I trust the queen will soon regain her strength.
Bet. No doubt, if this were all; but still I fear
Farther vicissitudes. The crazy times
Are big with strange events; each teeming hour
Is fruitful of new mischief—Who goes there?

Enter NORFOLK *in disguise.*

D. Nor. One born to freedom, and not bound to tell,
Whether he comes or goes.

Nawe. What would you here?
Bet. Let's take him to the governor.
D. Nor. Villains,
Stand off.
Bet. No villains serve the queen of Scots;
Learn that, base ruffian.
[*They draw their swords, and seize* NORFOLK.
D. Nor. Hold, are you the queen's?
Serve you queen Mary? then a word with you:
Know you this signet?
Nawe. Ha! the token sure!
Bet. The very token! it is the Duke!
D. Nor. My friends!
Bet. No more; this is a dangerous place; retire
Below the drawbridge, to that sally-port,
Half choaked with ruins; there wait patiently
Till we can execute the queen's commands.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

MARY *discovered on her Couch, surrounded by* LADY DOUGLAS *and her Maids.*

Q. Mary. Am I awake? Methinks the clouds disperse;
A watery gleam of light breaks through the mist;
The tepid sunbeams play, and 'gin to shed
Their all-enlightning, vivifying rays,
To chear the world, and dissipate its gloom;
All nature seems restored. My gentle maids,
Have you been with me whilst I slept! No doubt;
For I have dreamed I was in heaven; and you
Were surely the fair angels that I saw
Surrounding me in bliss. Douglas! I think

The last word that I heard was liberty;
Norfolk is set at liberty?

L. Doug. No doubt;
That was the purport of our joyful news.

Q. Mary. Then I'm alive again, my hopes and all;
Once more I'll dream of comfort, and indulge
Each fond delusion;—I shall see my love;
He'll soon be here;—Norfolk won't tarry long.

SHREWSBURY *and* HUNTINGDON *entering.*

E. Shr. Gently, my Lord! perhaps the queen's at rest.

E. Hun. We must use all dispatch.

E. Shr. Awhile! my Lord!—
Madam! the Earl of Huntingdon, who is joined
In trust with me—

[*Presenting* LORD HUNTINGDON *to the queen.*

Q. Mary. (*Aside.*) Alas! are these my dreams
Of joy and comfort? My Lords, I still rely
On your humanity and gentleness.

E. Hun. Our first instruction is to hold her safe.

[*Turning to* SHREWSBURY.

E. Shr. Aye, but in that beware how we transgress
The bounds of mercy: mercy is the due
Of all who breathe on England's soil; it grows
From the same root, and is entwined around
The sceptre of our queen; we are to her
Subjects and servants.

Q. Mary. I am neither, Lords!
I am, like her, a queen; nor will consent
To take, as mercy, what I claim as right,
Justice, and liberty.

E. Hun. This is no time
For such high strains; learn your condition here.

Q. Mary. Is this a language suited to your birth?

E. Hun. High birth is ne'er disgraced by truth,
I hope;
And for my tongue, 'twere better fail in that,
Than use my hands to perpetrate such deeds
As queens have sometimes done.
E. Shr. O! shame; such words,
If they were true—
E. Hun. Talk not of words! I come
To execute my orders. First, 'tis said,
This castle, till of late, was used to hold
The county prisoners.
L. Doug. How! would you place a queen—
A lady formed in Nature's fairest mould,
Reared like the tenderest plant, shaped by each grace,
Each exquisite last touch of polished art—
Among a tribe of felons?
E. Shr. What! immured
With all the refuse of the human race,
The outcasts of the earth?
E. Hun. My Lord, I know
My duty; sure you have forgot the charge.
Who are all these that make the prison show
More like a royal court?
[*Pointing at* MARY's *Attendants.*
Q. Mary. Mean, abject slave!
E. Hun. I here dismiss one half of this same train:
Begone! [*To the Attendants.*
Q. Mary. No, stop! inhuman wretch, forbear!
On me direct your vengeance—let not these
Poor helpless maids be driven from their home,
Though 'tis a poor disconsolate abode:
For still they wait with pleasure on their queen,
Proud to participate in all her woes:
But these are sentiments thou canst not feel.
Go, ask your mistress, whether such a train
Is all too proud to attend upon the crowns

Of France and Scotland? ask what retinue
I should have deemed becoming her estate
With me, at Paris, or at Holyrood?

E. Hun. Those days are past—without more idle words,
There's one condition, and but one, by which
You may be nobly entertained, and have
All freedom and respect—Give up your crown;
Confirm Earl Murray regent; and reside
In England with your son—

Q. Mary. No more! perform
The part that suits thee, jailor!—Thou lackest wit
To tempt me to resign my native crown;
To sacrifice at once myself, and son;
And make the world believe I own her charge.
No! I prefer her dungeons—Death itself.

E. Hun. Then be it so! Attendants, follow me;
Leave her to ruminate in solitude.

[*Exeunt* SHREWSBURY *and* HUNTINGDON, *with the attendants following reluctantly.*

Q. Mary. (*Sola.*) Give up my crown; my son; support my foe,
My mortal, base, unnatural enemy!
'Tis a plain challenge to a queen—Resign
All sense of honour, claims of birth, all thoughts
Of eminence, in early youth imbibed,
And grown habitual, to those whom chance
Has in derision decked with mortal crowns;
Or else prepare, and summon fortitude
To brave the threats of power, the taunts, the scorn,
The worst indignities that envy breeds;
That bitterest produce of the meanest plant
That grows in mortal breasts—Perhaps still more;
Perhaps her iron hand may rend these limbs.
This cruel wretch, this Huntingdon, is sent
To view my torments with unaltered eyes;
To sit, preside, direct the torturer's knife,

Glutting his greedy soul with scenes of blood,
While dying shrieks are music to his ears.
'Tis hard for female spirits to bear up,
And stand the fiery trial—Ah! who's that?
Spare me!

Enter NORFOLK *in disguise.*

D. Nor. O, fear me not, my life! 'tis I;
'Tis Norfolk at your feet.

Q. Mary. O heavens! once more
Save my poor intellects! O Norfolk, O!
My guardian angel! How shall I relate
All that befel me since? Yet rather say,
How have you 'scaped the jaws of that fell tigress?
How got you hither?

D. Nor. By the gift you gave;
Your token known, they straight conducted me,
By secret ways, through these old walls, and thus
These eyes at once are dazzled with a sight
Dangerous to look on.

Q. Mary. Danger is no more
When my brave Norfolk's come; we'll talk of love,
Of future bliss, and paint gay scenes of joy,
Counting our happy days before their time.

D. Nor. Alas! that's all, I fear, we e'er can hope.

Q. Mary. Let not your noble spirit, Norfolk, fail!

D. Nor. Spirit will fail when reason cannot hope.

Q. Mary. Norfolk cannot despond in Mary's cause.

D. Nor. O, think no more of such a worthless wretch;
A base, mean villain, traitor to my queen.

Q. Mary. Is love for me such treason in her sight?

D. Nor. My treason is not 'gainst my lawful queen,
But against her, to whom I'm bound by ties
Dearer than dull cold duty.

Q. Mary. Mean you me?

Doubtless you made confession of your love;
Was that a treason against me? 'twas great,
Worthy yourself; magnanimous to scorn
Her utmost rage, and brave her dire revenge.

D. Nor. (*Aside.*) How shall I wound her generous, noble heart?

Her, whose pure mind, whose unsuspicious thoughts
Dress up my sins in virtuous robes; thereby
But making them more hideous in my sight;
And me more hateful to myself.—O, fool!
That could be brought to purchase this vile life,
By quitting all that's dear to me on earth!

Q. Mary. What do I hear? O, say not so, my love!

You are not capable of such a thought.

D. Nor. Alas, I've pledged my word; I've sworn to it.

Q. Mary. Extorted vows are void, mere idle breath.

D. Nor. Mine have not been so hitherto—an oath,
A sacred oath—

Q. Mary. Had I no oath from you?

D. Nor. (*Aside.*) Ah! there's the dreadful maze, the double road,
Where each path leads to ruin and disgrace.

Q. Mary. O Norfolk, do not leave me! do not forsake
Your poor, forlorn, and faithful prisoner;
Already lost to all the world but thee;
My only comfort, refuge, under heaven.
O, 'twould belie the tenor of your life:
What would I not for thee? Let all the kings,
The rival princes that have wooed in vain,
Here in my prison recommence their suit,
Would I not spurn them all for thee? Yet fly,
I'm lost; but you are born to better fates.

D. Nor. (*Aside.*) Be firm, my soul! O, torture!

Q. Mary. Cruel man!
To cast me off because I'm here confined:
What sent me hither but my love for thee?
When last I saw you, then you were a man,
Replete with courage, gentleness, and love.
What have I done to change your nature thus?
If I'm in fault, strike at this wretched heart;
Let it not break! Or leave me to my fate,
To chains and dungeons, insults and hard words;
Let savage Huntingdon dismiss my train.

D. Nor. The horror of my crimes comes thick upon me.
Could I then leave thee thus, a prey to grief,
The sport of ruffian tongues! Why did not heaven
Blast with its lightning, and benumb these limbs,
So slow in striving to break ope the gates
Of this accursed cell? O foul disgrace!
Where shall I escape the pointing hand of Shame?
Here let me sue for pardon. All I ask,
Is to devote my life to rescue thee;
To stem the torrent, and oppose the flood,
Defy the deluge of o'erwhelming fate,
And snatch thee from the waves of misery.

Q. Mary. Are you then still my Norfolk? Do I dream?

D. Nor. No, while there's life in this poor frame, and while——

Q. Mary. Enough, my Norfolk, I am the debtor now:
Your noble resolution doth restore
The genial current of my frozen blood;
The blood of many hundred kings doth rise
To chase despondency, and swell my soul
With thoughts of nobler deeds, and times to come.
Mary shall once more triumph in her turn.

D. Nor. Then farewell, beautiful and injured saint!

Good angels hover round this dark abode,
And guard you till the cries of honour's voice
Shake these old battlements, and rend this roof;
Burst wide these bars, and once more charm the world
With radiant light of matchless beauty's beams.
Adieu, my love!

Q. Mary. Remember me—Farewell!

ACT THE FOURTH,

SCENE I.

Whitehall.

Enter ELIZABETH *and* CECIL.

Q. Eliz. Cecil! what more? the Duke, you say, is secur'd.
Sir W. Cec. Aye! beyond escape, my liege!—he's on his way;
Perhaps has reached the Tower.
Q. Eliz. Sir, he may thank
Your intercession for that liberty
Which proved his bane.
Sir W. Cec. Reproaches from my queen,
So just, fall like the chastisement of heaven
On those it favours.
Q. Eliz. Heaven favours none
But those who see their errors, and repent.
Sir W. Cec. If I repent me not the part I took,
May I be sharer in his punishment.
Q. Eliz. We know your faith; 'twas error, we're convinced;
Let assiduity atone for it;
Probe this infernal plot,

Sir W. Cec. 'Tis done! Behold
This train of correspondence, betwixt the duke,
The pope, the queen of Scots.
Q. Eliz. The treason is clear:
Cecil, my foes are numerous and strong.
Sir W. Cec. Were they in number as the summer leaves,
Their autumn doth approach; they soon shall fall,
Blasted, and driven by the wind.
Q. Eliz. This day
One falls at least; this faithless Lord no more
Shall dupe me with his promises; let him
Await his doom—yet stay! his birth and name—
Sir W. Cec. Are but fresh motives for example sake.
Q. Eliz. Then be it so.
Sir W. Cec. And her ambassador,
Who would have forced the Tower, and seized yourself?
Q. Eliz. That must be nicely weighed; for sovereignty,
Aye, but the shadow of it, claims regard:
'Tis not for us to extinguish hastily
That emanation from the royal light;
Although the source from whence it springs may seem
Somewhat obscured and clouded.
Sir W. Cec. But if threats
Produce confession, we may learn to guard
'Gainst farther harm.
Q. Eliz. Proceed. [*Exit* CECIL.
He needs no spur;
Nay, he anticipates my inmost thoughts.
The ambitious Duke's disposed of; such halfpaced,
Soft, scrupulous fools, make poor conspirators.
Mary yet lives: but for the ambassadors,
I should have sent her cross the Tweed ere now,

To Murray's care: I would it had been done,
When first she threw herself into my hands;
It seemed a consummation of success,
A period to my cares: but now this prize,
This precious prize, so unexpectedly
Entangled in my toils, proves a fierce snake
Which I can neither safely hold or loose;
While yet I have her in my grasp, she slips,
Twining her folds around my limbs—Alas!
I live in fear of my own prisoner,
And tremble on my throne. [*Exit* ELIZ.

SCENE II.

Enter DAVISON *to* CECIL.

Dav. The fatal order's sent; e'en now the Duke
Prepares for death.
Sir W. Cec. O Davison! these times
Demand dispatch; patience must have its bounds,
Or change its nature, and degenerate
To dangerous weakness.
Dav. Yet the piteous fall
Of this beloved, generous Duke, will rend
The hearts of all his countrymen: the streets
Are thronged with weeping multitudes; and groans
Betray more deep-felt sorrow than the tongue
Dares, in these days, to utter.
Sir W. Cec. Such esteem,
And general sympathy, denote his sway
And empire o'er the affections of the land;
And should have served to other ends than strife,
For the romantic honour and renown
Of liberating helpless, captive queens. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Tower.

NORFOLK *and the* LIEUTENANT *discovered.*

D. Nor. No, good lieutenant; I am at a point,
The very point and summit of my path,
Up life's steep rough ascent; and now must leap
The dreadful precipice.
Lieut. Yet still, my Lord,
There's room for mercy; and if fame speaks true,
Good cause for it. 'Tis said your grace did save
Her majesty's own person from assault.
D. Nor. As I'm a Christian man, and doomed to die,
'Tis true; and never have I aught devised
Against her sacred self: but 'tis in vain
To sue for mercy; nor is it my wish
To ask that mercy which I've once abus'd.
Could I but, during this sad interval,
Could I but send one——

Enter a servant, delivering a paper to the LIEUTENANT.

Ha! what's that I see?
Lieut. (*Reading.*) Alas!——
D. Nor. Enough! I read it in your looks:
My hour is come——
Lieut. My Lord, the guards attend.

Enter SHERIFF *and Guards.*

D. Nor. I am content, thank heaven! to meet my fate;

Not from indifference to life, or claim
To innocence; far otherwise in both:
But knowing mercy's infinite extent,
I cast the world behind me—One farewell!
And then—

Sher. My Lord, in truth, we may not wait.

D. Nor. I go—and, good lieutenant, tell the queen,
That he who lately stood in highest rank,
(Now sunk below the meanest citizen)
Though he's pronounced a traitor by his peers,
Whom yet he blames not, still appeals to heaven
In his last moments, that there lives not one
More true to his religion, country, queen,
Than dying Thomas Howard—Then implore
Her kind compassion to my orphan babes.
Say that my dying words were, "Peace be with her!"
And as I am the first to fall by the axe,
So may I be the last, in her blest reign!
May she do justice, and protect the oppressed!
So may her fame reach all posterity!
And by her hand, do thou, O gracious heaven!
Build up the walls of England!

Sher. Alas! my Lord!
Delay is at our peril; we beseech—

D. Nor. A little moment! I had something yet,
But let it pass! here! here! it rests; while yet
Life's current flows, while yet my nerves perform
Their functions—Mary! I must think on thee!
Bless thee with my last breath: may heaven afford
That succour which this mortal arm in vain
Attempted! may'st thou never feel such pangs
As he who dies for thee! and now, e'en now,
Flies with impatience from this hell to seek
A refuge in the cold embrace of death.—
Lead on!—O, Mary! Mary! Mary! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Whitehall.

Enter ELIZABETH *and* CECIL.

Q. Eliz. Cecil! our last commands have been performed?

Sir W. Cec. Madam, they have.

Q. Eliz. And how behaved the Duke?

Sir W. Cec. With manly, decent constancy; and seemed
Most penitent in that he broke his word;
But still disclaiming fully all designs
Against your crown and person; at the last,
His parting soul seemed bent on his own fate
Less than on Mary's——

Q. Eliz. (*Aside.*) How! how's this! intent
On her at last? must her attractions reach
Even to the very brink of death? Alas!
That each progressive circumstance of woe
Tends but to prove the power of her charms.

Sir W. Cec. Her minister, the bishop, hath confessed
His share of guilt, and opened all the plot
'Twixt him and Alva, Philip and the pope.

Q. Eliz. Then bid him instantly depart my realm;
If he beholds to-morrow's setting sun
On English ground, his privilege is gone,
He dies a traitor's death; and from his queen,
No more ambassadors I'll entertain;
Or risk my life to grace my prisoner.

Sir W. Cec. The French king's minister, of late, is grown
Importunate for fresh indulgences;
That she may be allowed to take the air,
With fit attire and decent retinue:
All this is asked of grace, not as a part
Of Anjou's marriage treaty.

Q. Eliz. If that serve
To amuse and hoodwink France, she'll think no more
On Mary.—Davison! what brings thee thus?

Enter DAVISON.

Dav. Dispatches from your minister in France.

Q. Eliz. Of weighty matter?

Dav. Heavier far, and worse,
Than mortal ears can bear; heaven guard us all
From such disasters as no tongue can tell!
A visitation which the world, till now,
Ne'er saw or heard of———

Q. Eliz. Speak! no more delay.

Dav. Then hear the fate of all our friends in France,
Swept from the face of the earth, exterminate,
In one black night, at one infernal blow,
Dealt by the hand of Rome: there scarcely lives
A protestant to tell the massacre.

Q. Eliz. and Sir W. Cec. The massacre!

Dav. I said the word: the tale
Runs thus:—That signals from the Louvre top
Proclaimed the time of slaughter; Paris first,
And 'tis supposed, within an hour, that all
The cities of that kingdom streamed with blood.
Nor age, nor sex, was spared; old men, nay babes,
Fast in their helpless mother's arms, were pierced
With the same weapon; sick men in their beds,
Brave warriors in their sleep, were butchered; one,

One only checked their course—The first who fell,
Brave Coligni, whose very name appals
The bigot's heart—At sight of his grey locks,
So known where'er the thickest battle raged,
They stood aghast, till one more hardened wretch,
With eyes averted, stabbed him to the heart.

Q. Eliz. O! let me shed one tear for that great man!

Dav. Marshals of France, and bishops, led the band,
Invoking heaven, yet calling out for blood;
And, O eternal infamy! the king
Looked on, encouraged, nay imbrued his hands,
His sacred hands, in his own subjects' blood;
Pointing his carabine at those who fled
Apart, like stricken deer—while he, in sport,
At his balcony revelled, 'midst a throng
Of ladies, praising his dexterity,
Taught, like himself, by his more cruel mother,
From early youth, to jest at homicide.

Q. Eliz. No more, the tale's too dreadful, I'll retire.
May heaven preserve my people from this curse!
War, famine, pestilence, are trifles all,
Compared to this corruption of the mind,
This degradation of humanity.
I'll to my closet; let none dare approach;
No cares of state presume to interrupt
My holy solitude. [*Exit* ELIZABETH.

Dav. The queen's retired
Most opportunely, for I've that to tell,
Which to no ear but thine——

Sir W. Cec. What, Davison,
Hast thou, that can the least attention claim,
After thy dreadful tale?

Dav. That which demands
All your dispatch, prudence, activity;

The queen's in danger, and each hour lost
Appears an age; ruffians there are——
Sir W. Cec. How's this?
Her life in danger? say by whom? and how?
Dav. These ruffians came from Rheims, a seminary
Intoxicated with the omnipotence
Of papal power, and Rome's accursed decrees,
Thinking, that if they perished in the attempt
They gained a glorious crown of martyrdom.
This motley crew, composed of soldiers, priests,
Of various orders, mad enthusiasts,
So confident in their iniquity,
Cast lots for weapons; then in full career
Of riot, 'midst their cups, for frolic sake,
Were painted in one portrait, each with the arms
That fell to him by lot.—These villains all
Are seized.
Sir W. Cec. Can you no farther trace the plot?
Are you so slack a friend? Till now I thought
That if you gained the clue, your zeal would soon
Tread back the windings of the labyrinth,
And from her dark recess drag forth to light
This sorceress.
Dav. Mistrust not yet that zeal:
Behold this fruit of it.—These lines I've gained
[*Delivering Letters.*
From Gifford, a corrupt, abandon'd priest,
Who sold his fellow-traitors—these are said
To be the writing of Queen Mary's hand;
And whether true——
Sir W. Cec. Enough! they strongly bear
The semblance—now 'tis done—thanks, Davison!
I'll to the queen, nor heed her prohibition.
[CECIL *knocks at the closet-door*, ELIZABETH *enters from thence.*

Q. Eliz. Who dares with sacrilegious steps approach,
And intervene betwixt his sovereign's prayers
And heaven's impending vengeance on our race?
Sir W. Cec. 'Twas not without just cause—
Q. Eliz. No cause, I trust,
Warrants plain disobedience of my word,
My strict commands, Sir;——
Sir W. Cec. Madam, these events
Brook no delay———
Q. Eliz. Events! why, what events?
Canst thou add flames to Ætna's raging fire?
Imagination can no sequel find
Worthy the tale he told.
Sir W. Cec. This hour Davison
Fears for your royal self.
Q. Eliz. Speak, Davison!
Dav. I trust
All will be well, for the conspirators
Are almost all secured.
Q. Eliz. Conspirators!
Dav. Aye, most inveterate, implacable!
Hell never sent such fiends to curse mankind,
Taught by religious zeal to emulate,
Nay to contest the prize of parricide.
Q. Eliz. You say they are secured?
Sir W. Cec. Know you their names?
Dav. Their chief is Babington; a youth whose zeal
For Mary springs from a distemper'd brain,
Inflamed by love.—And more, 'tis fully proved
That Mary's in the league.
Sir W. Cec. An associate
In this conspiracy.
Q. Eliz. Remove her straight
From gentle Shrewsbury's care to Fotheringay;

Let her no more be treated as a queen.

[*Exit* DAVISON.

Cecil, am I not just? why, to what length
Will she abuse my patience?

Sir W. Cec. How many crimes
Which now disgrace the annals of the world
Owe their existence to false clemency,
And weak procrastination? She must die;
Or you, a willing sacrifice, must yield
Your life to save her.

Q. Eliz. Mean you, that through fear,
I should assume her part, and basely turn
Assassin?

Sir W. Cec. Heaven forbid! are we then sunk
Below the level of the pagan world?
For they have justice; justice is the right
Of all beneath the sun; and shall not you,
The source and fountain of it, be allowed
What you dispense to all? Are royal lives
Worth less than those of subjects? or is she,
This mighty captive, paramount to laws,
Divine and human?

Q. Eliz. Whither tends this theme?

Sir W. Cec. To justice; to the fair, impartial course
Of justice——

Q. Eliz. Cecil! you forget yourself,
And her whom you address: is this your zeal,
Your reverence for royalty? What law
Can render her amenable to me?

Sir W. Cec. Nature has laws; instinct, alike to all,
Promulgates them.—Assassination needs
No human statutes to declare its guilt;
They are but feeble, artificial props,
The patchwork of society, which serve

Only to swell the catalogue of crimes
By inefficient sanguinary means.
Thank heaven! no mortal is exempt from law
Who shall attempt the life of England's queen.

Q. Eliz. Aye in this island; but the general voice
Of Europe would cry shame!—Presumptuous man!
No more—Let not your forwardness o'erstep
The bounds of our forbearance, nor abuse
Your sovereign's ear with base suggestions! cease!

Enter DAVISON.

What fresh disaster now? hate, fear, and death,
Revolt, and treason, mark thy ominous steps.

Dav. No prince was ever more beloved and feared;
Your people, in one bond associated,
Join to defend your life, and with one voice
Call for immediate justice on her head,
Whose life is incompatible with yours.

Q. Eliz. For that alternative, if that were all,
Freely I'd pardon all her injuries:
But for my people's sake, it cannot be:
Heaven has entrusted them, and their true faith,
To my defence.

Dav. Our lives, religion, all!
Grant, O! grant justice!

Q. Eliz. Have I not sworn to it,
When I succeeded to the imperial crown?
You have our leave, our royal warrant, Davison.
[*Exit* DAVISON.
(*Aside.*) Heavens, what have I pronounced! I dare not think!
Then I must act, and leave slow timorous thought;
This is no time for scruples and remorse.
Cecil, 'tis done! since nothing but her blood
Can satisfy your thirsty souls.

Sir W. Cec. My liege,
Your grateful people will applaud the deed;
Bless the defender of their faith.
Q. Eliz. 'Tis false;
The universal world will curse the deed;
All future ages execrate the name
Of her who brought anointed royalty
To such disgrace: yet there is time—who waits?

Enter SERVANT.

Fly quickly; call back Davison—Alas!
[*Exit* SERVANT.
Alas, poor queen! cruel, perfidious man!
Your baneful counsel prompted me to this.

Enter DAVISON.

O, are you come?—Davison! I recal
The horrid sentence.
Sir W. Cec. Such are now the thanks,
And ever were, of those who weakly strive
To save a prince determined on his fall.
Madam! since, inattentive to my prayers,
You thus devote yourself—let me retire,
Unaccessary to your fate.
Q. Eliz. Cecil!
I must not lose your service.
Sir W. Cec. Why should I
Stay to endure that vengeance, which will fall
On all your ministers, when Mary's plots
Rob England of her queen?
Dav. Till that's atchieved,
She'll never rest; her object is your crown.
Has she renounced her claim? No; to this hour
She sometimes boasts her title to your throne,
As confidently as she used in France,
When she with her first husband's fleurs-de-lis
Quartered the arms of England.

Q. Eliz. That indeed——
That was an early pledge; with her first milk
She drank the seeds of hate: still, as she grew,
The inveterate poison spread; and now she pours,
Full in my bosom, all the venomous store.

Sir W. Cec. O, 'tis not mercy, it is cruelty
To spare her, when the safety of your realm
Hangs on her fate; what, if her voice should pierce
The prison walls, and through the nation sound
A signal for a second massacre?

Q. Eliz. Ah, there is the word! that word recals my mind,
Chills all my blood, and drives its current back.
Heaven doth exact a sacrifice to those
Who fell for our true faith: 'tis heaven's decree—
It is resolved—She dies—Fly, Davison!
Outstrip the winds, and with the winged speed
Of lightning, let the thunderbolt of heaven
Strike her devoted head!—Away! Away!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

Fotheringay Castle.

Enter LADY DOUGLAS *and* BETON.

L. Doug. Beton, alas ! you prophesy too well ;
Each moment brings some melancholy proof
Of your foreboding spirit.
Bet. Could I doubt
The consequence of such facility ?
You know how oft and earnestly I urged
The danger of submission ; but to plead,
A queen, in her own person, thus to plead !
L. Doug. Had she not pleaded, this prejudging court,
As by confession, had pronounced her doom.
And yet, could she suspect that such a list
Of all the great nobility, such names,
The warriors, heroes, patriots of the land,
Could so disgracefully be led to join
In concert to her ruin ?
Bet. O ! too oft
Servile compliances are brought about
By joining numbers and great names, where none,

No single, worthy individual
Would show his face, or lend his honest fame.
Know you what urged her to appear in court?
L. Doug. 'Twas to defend her honour that she came,
In all the majesty of innocence;
Descending from a throne, she offered up
Her dignity, a willing sacrifice,
To her fair fame; impelled by conscious pride,
That inward pride which purity of mind
Inspires, and prompts to dare corruption's art,
To face, upon unequal terms, the wiles
Of perjured treachery.—O! 'twas a sight
New to the world; so strange, that mortal eyes
Their credit lost; none who beheld, believed:
But, Beton, such a mockery as this
Can ne'er be realized?
Bet. O, surely not;
'Tis but an artifice to justify
Past cruelties; and what I fear the most,
Perhaps still closer custody.
L. Doug. Alas!
They dare not sure proceed to take her life?
Bet. O, no! 'twould rouse all Europe; shake all thrones;
Loosen the deepest-rooted monarchies:—
They dare not think of it—you see they're gone
For farther counsel to the Star Chamber.
L. Doug. 'Tis time to attend the queen; heaven guard her still! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

MARY'S *Chamber, Fotheringay Castle.*

Enter LADY DOUGLAS *to the* QUEEN.

Q. Mary. Douglas! come hither, Douglas! sit by me;
Thou art the constant solace of my woes.
I am almost worn out with grief and care;
And, as you sometimes hint, I plainly find
My health is much impaired—I had not strength
Or spirits to do justice to my cause
Before this court.

L. Doug. O my royal mistress!
How could you condescend to plead to them?

Q. Mary. Alas! too confident in innocence,
I undervalued human treachery;
Suffered my ears to catch the specious sound
Of Hatton's soft persuasive eloquence;
Who, fair and false as Belial, from his tongue
Shed manna, which beguiled my silly heart,
Brought me to compromise my dignity
By condescensions, which the petulance
Of rancorous Burleigh's bitter enmity
Had ne'er effected.—O accursed fraud!

L. Doug. Fraud! aye, and open force; did they not seize
Your papers, burst your cabinet, and rob,
Aye, basely pilfer all your little hoard,
The remnant of your treasure, which you saved
To pay your poor domestics, and for acts
Of charity?

Q. Mary. But that, you know, of late
Has been prohibited; because 'twas found
One still remaining source of happiness.
L. Doug. Infernal, unexampled infamy!
Yes, my dear mistress, 'twas a cruelty
More felt by you than by the poor themselves
Who lost your daily charity.
Q. Mary. Douglas!
Forsaken as I am, I could not think
That my own secretary would have turned
Against his mistress; and in that, where he,
Above all others, knew me innocent:
I never much esteemed the man; but yet
I did not think the viper would have bit
The hand that fed it.—He first came to me
From my poor uncle, the late Cardinal.
My uncle was the prop of all my counsels;
Alas! he's gone; and Charles, my brother, now
No longer reigns in France—he too is lost!
His end was wretched and unnatural.
And for my son, my only child, he reigns
In Scotland, patient of a mother's wrongs;
I am forbid to hear from him.—Alas!
Had he the heart or spirit of a man—

Enter BETON.

Bet. Pardon the messenger of dismal news!
L. Doug. (*Aside.*) O me, what now?
Bet. And, O! prepare to hear
The heaviest tidings.
Q. Mary. I've been long prepared.
Bet. Your own misfortunes you have ever borne
With fortitude, but other's sufferings—
Q. Mary. What, others? speak! alas! I guess.
Bet. Too well
I fear.
Q. Mary. The Duke?

Bet. His troubles are no more;
He rests in peace, beyond the tyrant's sway,
Where mortal envy cannot reach: alas!
Poor man! he fell a victim to his love;
His dying breath still blessed you.
Q. Mary. O just heavens!
Since it has pleased you thus to visit him
For my offences, let my prayers ascend
In his behalf: yet stay; he's risen now,
Whence he looks down with pity and contempt
On worldly cares; views with serenity
Her despicable malice. O mean wretch!
Why dared you not let fall your vengeance here?
He dies at last in my defence! to save
This poor forlorn existence. Fie upon't!
Why lingers yet my breath? Out, out, for shame!
Seek the wide air, and catch my Norfolk's soul.

SCENE III.

The Hall.

Enter BETON, *meeting* SIR AMIAS PAULET.

Bet. (*Aside.*) Paulet arrived! What is your pleasure here?
Sir A. Paul. I am about to seek your mistress, Sir.
Bet. The queen is ill at ease, and needs repose.
Sir A. Paul. Sir, I have business to communicate——
Bet. Concerning her?
Sir A. Paul. Aye, very nearly too?
Bet. From Westminster?

Sir A. Paul. From the Star Chamber, Sir;
No less than that her secretaries both
Have now confessed the plot, and sworn to it.
Bet. O perjured, venal slaves! They never dared
Confront her with these murderous lies—the sight
Of injured innocence had choked their speech.
Sir A. Paul. Say rather, their repentance has produced
Full proof to justify the course of law.
Bet. Who, but a judge determined to convict,
Would credit those whose faith is forfeited
By plain, avowed desertion of their trust?
'Twere a judicial murder—the worst crime
This sinful world has known: first, as the judge
Is, for his purity and wisdom, placed
In high authority, and charged to guard
Fair innocence; then, as the sufferer
By such injustice, feels disgrace and shame
Added to all the bitterness of death.
Sir A. Paul. Is she, who claims protection, above law?
Bet. Call you imprisonment protection? O!
Mere subterfuges, worthy of your queen:
This last exploit of bribing evidence
Was an achievement suiting her great power,
Her riches, her wise ministers—O, shame!
Sir A. Paul. Is this the language, Sir, of Mary Stuart,
Late queen of Scotland? She shall answer for it:
I must proceed to her—
Bet. Mean, servile wretch!
Paulet! if you're a man, some future day
You'll not refuse atonement for these words.

SCENE IV.

The Queen's Chamber.

QUEEN MARY, LADY DOUGLAS, *Two Maids, and* SIR AMIAS PAULET.

Q. Mary. Are these your orders, Sir, before my face
To take my canopy?
Sir A. Paul. No doubt they are.
Q. Mary. And you're instructed thus to insult a queen!
Sir A. Paul. I am instructed to consider you
As one attempting to destroy a queen.
Q. Mary. 'Tis false, by all that's sacred! Heaven well knows
I would not touch the meanest life on earth,
Much less the queen's, for all that she enjoys,
All her great empire—No; on my royal word.
Sir A. Paul. Henceforth, no more let convicts idly dream
Of forfeit titles—Farewell, Mary Stuart!
Q. Mary. Thinks she that such indignities degrade
My native titles! Tell her, she doth fix
Eternal shame, contempt, and ridicule,
On her own name, by these low practices;
And say, though she may rob me of my life,
Mary will die the lawful queen of Scots.
[*Exit* SIR A. PAULET.
L. Doug. O my dear mistress! heed not such base men,

They are beneath your care.

Q. Mary. They harass me;
My spirits are worn out; I'll lay me down—
[MARY *reclines on her sopha.*
Methinks soft music would compose my nerves:
I once had music at command—But, O!
The lute's unstrung that smoothed the brow of care;
Cold is the tongue that charmed with living fire.

L. Doug. Allow your faithful maid to try her voice.

[*Here* QUEEN MARY'*s Lamentations should be sung by* LADY DOUGLAS, *or one of the maids.*

Q. Mary. These plaintive strains bring quiet to my mind,
Balm to my troubled soul; they sooth my woes,
Recal old times, and tell me what I was.
Douglas! while yet I was in infancy,
The cruel father of this cruel queen
Asked me in marriage, from my native land,
For his own son; and failing in his suit,
Waged war with Scotland: afterwards, you know,
It was my fate to mount the throne of France,
As consort of young Francis; on whose death,
(O, ever lamentable, fatal loss!)
I staid in France, till, by the jealousy
And cruel arts of Catherine, I was driven
To seek my own hereditary crown.—
Dost thou remember how reluctantly
I left the gay and sprightly court of France?

L. Doug. Aye, as 'twere yesterday—I see you still,
Fixed like a statue at the vessel's stern,
With eyes intent upon the Gallic shore,
Watching each lessening object, till the coast,
The wide-extended coast, and distant spires
Of Calais, glittering in the evening skies,

Alone remained in view; darkness came on,
And tears incessant, till the morning calm
Gave one faint glimpse of the departing scene:
O! then you beat your breast, and waved your hand,
While intermingled tears and sobs half-choked
Your ill-articulated, last adieu.

Q. Mary. O, what a change for a young queen of France!
From all the pleasures of that splendid court,
To the morose, sour aspect, the dull cant,
And furious zeal, of Scotland's puritans!

L. Doug. What barbarous, fanatic insolence!

Q. Mary. O, I was destined in my native land
To heavier ills; to Darnley's cruelty;
Murray's ambition; Morton's treachery;
My subjects' mean desertion of their queen;
Their base revolt, and baser calumnies.

L. Doug. The time shall come, when the impartial world
Shall nobly vindicate your injured fame.

Q. Mary. Long since, dear Douglas, I've resigned this world,
With all its vanities, and fixed my heart
On heaven alone—Ah me! who's this?—

Enter DAVISON.

L. Doug. Who art thou?

Dav. One whose approach forebodes a blacker storm
Than e'er struck terror in the human breast.

Q. Mary. Know you this man?

L. Doug. No; but I fear he brings
Fresh insults and new rigours.

Q. Mary. Whence come you?

Dav. From the queen's self; who, most reluctantly,

Nor without many bitter sighs and tears—
L. Doug. Tears of a crocodile—
Dav. I say, with tears
The queen dispatched me to announce the fate,
The fate contained within this warrant—
[*Delivering a warrant.*
Q. Mary. Ha! [*Reading the warrant.*

Enter BETON.—*A Drum is heard beating a slow March.*

Bet. O mercy, heavens! alas, my queen; I fear
Some dreadful fate; the Earls of Shrewsbury
And Huntingdon, attended by the guards,
Are at the castle gate.
L. Doug. Ah, here they come!
The array of death! Ah! is it come to this?

Enter SHREWSBURY *and* HUNTINGDON, *with Guards, Executioner,* &c.

E. Shr. The painful office which I now perform—
Q. Mary. I know your business—
E. Shr. Ah! know you, alas!
With what dispatch we're ordered to proceed?
L. Doug. O murder! murder! cruel murderers, stay!
Q. Mary. Patience, my child! I did not think, I own,
My sister queen would have proceeded thus;
But if my body cannot sustain one blow,
My soul deserves not those eternal joys
In heaven my holy faith has promised me.
E. Hun. 'Tis your accursed faith that seals your doom;
While you're on earth, there is no surety
For our true faith—
Q. Mary. What do I hear? good heaven!
Say you that I'm to suffer for my faith?
O, happy and glad tidings! glorious news!

Repeat that word, thou messenger of joy!
Angels, descending from their blest abodes,
Could not have hailed me with more welcome sounds—
Then it hath pleased the gracious heavens at last
To hear my prayers, and recompense my woes.
Now, in one blessed moment, all my pain,
All my long sufferings are exchanged for bliss.
These ears have heard me thus proclaimed a saint;
And Mary's, aye, poor Mary's weeping eyes
Have lived to see her crown of martyrdom.
I'll make short preparation; and mean while,
Let all my servants be in readiness;
And bid my confessor to follow me.

L. Doug. We will obey—

[*Exit Lady* DOUGLAS, *with the Maids.*

E. Hun. This may not be allowed;
We came not here to see our holy faith
Mocked by the tricks and superstitious forms
Of papal ceremony—Your confessor
Must not approach—

Q. Mary. Sir, I was born to reign;
I am your mistress's kinswoman; like her,
Descended from King Henry—Dowager
Of France, and Scotland's lawful queen; as such,
I pray you, treat me.

[*Exit* MARY *to her oratory.*

Bet. Inhuman tyranny,
That would extend its barbarous cruelties
Beyond the grave!

E. Shr. We may not violate
Our strict commands—

Bet. Heaven will remember them:
You are, then, ordered to refuse a queen,
In the last moments of her life, those rites,
That consolation, which is always given
To the most hardened, graceless criminals,

That e'er insulted justice, or brought shame
On human nature?—

E. Hun. Nay, urge not that; for, lo!
A pious prelate now attends without
To offer his assistance—I'll propose—

[HUNTINGDON *offers to go towards the oratory.*

Bet. If you're not lost to all humanity,
Disturb not her last meditations thus.

[*Stopping* HUNTINGDON.

Enter Lady DOUGLAS, *with four Maids, a Physician, and an Almoner.*—BETON *places himself with them.*

E. Hun. Why are you all assembled here?

L. Doug. You see
The sad remains of her poor family.

E. Hun. You are, at best, but useless, idle show;
Perhaps employed for superstitious use;
Retire!—

L. Doug. You cannot mean to hinder us
From this last, wretched office?—

E. Hun. Nay, begone!

Bet. Infernal savage!

L. Doug. Yet have mercy, Lords!
O! you are far more gentle, Shrewsbury!
Drive not her few, poor faithful maids from her;
Let them receive her blessing, and behold
Their dying mistress' looks, and close her eyes.
In pity, nay in decency, comply;
Is't fit the person of a royal queen
Should lie a mangled and unheeded corse,
Without her maids to shroud those precious limbs,
Which kneeling princesses were proud to adorn?

E. Shr. 'Tis not in nature to resist the claim.

Enter MARY *from her oratory, dressed gorgeously, with a cross and beads.*

Q. Mary. This world to me is as a thing that's past;
A burden shaken off—The retrospect
Exhibits nothing but a wearisome
And tedious pilgrimage—What is to come
Opens a scene of glory to my eyes:
Therefore with joy I hasten to begin
This course of triumph——O! my faithful friends!
Ye all—all of you, my poor followers,
Have sacrificed your days to share my woes.
Now let me ask forgiveness for the past;
Pardon my many negligences!—

L. Doug. O!

Thus, on our knees, we crave your blessing all.

Q. Mary. Yes, I will bless you with my latest breath;
'Tis all I have to give: except, perchance,
Some trifles, which I here bequeath among you.
[*Delivering her will.*
Beton, accept this ring—take that. And thou!
[*Giving a ring to* BETON, *and her Physician, and her Almoner.*
These tokens may remind you of my love.
Come hither, all my maids!
[*The Maids rise and approach.*
Farewel, sweet friends.
[MARY *kisses each of them.*
We soon shall meet. Come, Douglas! let me bind
Thine arm with this my bracelet; that so oft
As you behold it, you may think on me.
[*Clasping her in her arms.*
Now let me hold thee thus—Nay, do not weep,
That I'm translated from this scene of care
To endless joy. Once more, farewel!—lead on

[MARY *makes a sign for the procession to go on, and is proceeding, when* MELVIN, *an old man with grey locks, throws himself at her feet, in tears.*

Mel. O, mercy! mercy, heaven! alas, my queen!
That I should live to such an age for this,
To see this sight, and carry back this tale!

Q. Mary. Melvin! my faithful servant, Melvin, here!
In my last moment—They have kept thee long
Out of thy mistress' sight—thou comest in time
For her poor blessing—Good old man, return;
Commend me to my son—tell him I've done
No prejudice to Scotland's crown—tell him
My latest words were those of Scotland's queen.

[MELVIN *tries to speak, and is unable.*

Poor soul, thy griefs have chok'd thy speech! Adieu!
Bear witness, all! tell it throughout the world,
But chiefly to my family in France,
That I die firmly in their holy faith!
And you, ye ministers from England's queen!
Tell her, she hath my pardon; and relate,
That, with my dying breath, I do beseech
Her kindness to my servants; and request
Safe conduct for them into France; that done,
I've nought to ask, but that my poor remains
May be bestowed in Lorrain, or in France,
Where I may hope for pious obsequies;
For here the tombs of my progenitors
Are all profaned—Remember my requests!—
Now lead me on in triumph, till I gain
Immortal joys, and an immortal reign.

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THE

FUGITIVE;

A

COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

KING'S THEATRE, HAY-MARKET.

BY

JOSEPH RICHARDSON, Esq.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Lord Dartford,	*Mr Dodd.*
Sir William Wingrove,	*Mr Bensley.*
Mr Wingrove,	*Mr Wroughton.*
Old Manly,	*Mr Parsons.*
Young Manly,	*Mr Palmer.*
Admiral Cleveland,	*Mr King.*
Mr Welford,	*Mr Barrymore.*
Jenkins,	*Mr Maddox.*
Larron,	*Mr Wewitzer.*
O'Donnel,	*Mr Phillimore.*
William,	*Mr Benson.*
Servant,	*Mr Banks.*
Mrs Manly,	*Mrs Hopkins.*
Miss Herbert,	*Miss Farren.*
Miss Julia Wingrove,	*Mrs Jordan.*
Miss Manly,	*Mrs Kemble.*
Mrs Larron,	*Miss Pope.*
Mrs Rachel Cleveland,	*Mrs Ward.*

THE

FUGITIVE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in SIR WILLIAM WINGROVE'S *House.*

Enter SIR WILLIAM *and Miss* JULIA WINGROVE.

Miss J. Win. Let me intreat you, sir, to hear me —let reason be my advocate.

Sir W. Win. Reason, Julia! You know 'tis my delight, my glory. What constitutes the pre-eminence of man, but his reason? 'Tis, like the sacred virtue of high blood, a natural exaltation, of which we can never lose the advantage, but by voluntary degradation, or perverse misuse—What but reason is the foundation of my preference for Lord Dartford? Is he not of a family as ancient even as my own?

Miss J. Win. Did Lord Dartford inherit any of the virtues, which probably acquired those highly valued honours of his ancestry, my father might have some cause to regret that his daughter's inclinations were at enmity with her duty.

Sir W. Win. And where, madam, have you learnt, that the splendour of Lord Dartford's family suffers any diminution in his own person?

Miss J. Win. Where some of the happiest years of my life have been passed, sir; at my dear deceased aunt's.

Sir W. Win. Mr Manly, now, I dare say, had not the least share in producing this aversion to Lord Dartford.

Miss J. Win. Mr Manly, sir! Mr Manly would scorn—nor can it ever be necessary for him to raise his own character by a useless degradation of Lord Dartford.

Sir W. Win. Aye, aye, now we have it—I thought what share the eloquence of your aunt had had in this apostacy from the faith of your ancestors —Mr Manly, it seems, has contrived to make so successful a monopoly of all the virtues, that there does not remain even the leavings of an accomplishment for any other person. But since I despair of making you enter into the just views of your family, by dutifully consenting, as you ought, to marry a man for the revered merit of his blood, your brother shall try, whether your young spark be not composed of more practicable materials.

Miss J. Win. For heaven's sake, dear sir, forego this—What must be the consequence of their meeting?

Sir W. Win. If you have any objection to the interview, you know how to prevent it.

Miss J. Win. O, sir, do not force me to so dreadful an alternative. I will, if you require it, bind

myself by the most solemn engagements to give up all thoughts of Mr Manly, only let me no more be persecuted with the addresses of Lord Dartford.

Sir W. Win. Nay, now I must believe you; for where has it been recorded that an enamoured damsel ever broke a promise to an old father, when given at the expense of a young lover? For once, however, you must excuse me, if I am a little disobedient to the authority of precedent, and endeavour to find some better security for the honour of my family, even than your love-sick renunciation of the object of your affections.

Miss J. Win. Yet, sir, hear me.

Sir W. Win. I do hear you—But first tell me why have I preserved you, since the decease of your aunt, from all intercourse with the world, with the single exception of the friendship of Miss Herbert, whose approaching alliance with your brother gives her a common interest in the lustre of our house?—Why have I, like a fond parent, forbid you society?—kept you sacred from the arts of our sex and the more dangerous follies of your own?—locked you up, and guarded you, like the archives of my own family, that you might increase in value as you advanced in years?—Why, but to secure you from the contagion of a degenerate world—who feel more anxiety about the means of supporting new families, than awful reverence for the names of old ones, and would meanly thrive by plebeian industry, rather than diet on the rich recollection of their immortal ancestry.

Miss J. Win But my dear father, just now, kindly condescended to say he would suffer me to reason with him on this subject. Can birth alone entitle a man to the high distinction you speak of? —And surely Lord Dartford—

Sir W. Win. Grant me patience, heaven! Do you call in question the prudence of my choice? Ungrateful Julia, never more will I hear you on this subject—and now attend my final determination—To-morrow you marry Lord Dartford.

Miss J. Win. To-morrow, sir!—You will not?—

Sir W. Win. Positively to-morrow—neither remonstrances nor tears shall sway me from my determined purpose. I leave you now to your reflections, and go to adjust the necessary preliminaries of a ceremony, that will recal you, inconsiderate girl, to duty and to reason. [*Exit.*

Miss J. Win. Is it possible!—Can my father thus shut his heart to the distresses of his Julia?—My brother too, happy in his own affections, not only abandons me to the interested rigour of his cruel ambition, but assists and animates him in the prosecution of his views.—Wretched, friendless Julia!—Whither wilt thou turn?—Ah Manly, that amidst the various excellencies of thy heart there is yet a careless generosity in thy nature—an irregular, though not ungraceful excess in thy very virtues, which, though it neither forbids esteem, nor damps affection, yet gives the alarm to delicacy, and checks the full pleasure of a fearless, unsuspecting confidence—were it not for this, I think I could not deny myself with thee a willing asylum from the severities of this domestic persecution. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

SIR WILLIAM'S *garden.*

Enter Young MANLY.

Young Man. Thus far I have achieved my purpose without discovery—what a devil of a wall have I had to scramble up to obtain even the chance of an interview—The sulky grandeur of your ancient battlements was always the difficulty and the glory of an enamoured hero—But what can the maddest of the most venerable lads of chivalry lay claim to, that does not to the full as reasonably belong to me? I have all their hopes with all their apprehensions, all their fears with all their confidence, all their weakness with all their fortitude—So I think it cannot be denied but that I possess as many good, sound contradictions in my character as the best of them—I have not, indeed, the gift of waiting that those gentlemen had, for I begin already to feel impatient at Julia's delay. Would I could gain but a distant glimpse of her, or hear one strain of her enchanting voice—dear melodious voice! soft as a lover's sigh embodied into music, and sweet as the inspired eloquence of a consenting smile—But soft! soft! she approaches, and in tears! let me endeavour to learn the cause of them, before I make my appearance; what must he be composed of, and what does he not deserve, who has been profane enough to excite them. [*Retires behind a tree.*

Enter JULIA, *and seats herself in an alcove.*

Miss J. Win. Here let me rest a while, and endeavour to collect my scattered thoughts. Could it be believed that my father, strict as his general notions of honour are, should think of forcing me to become the wife of a man whom my soul abhors!

Young Man. Forcing thee!

Miss J. Win. When, too, he is convinced of my being attached to another.

Young Man. To another!

Miss J. Win. I think he loves me.

Young Man. I am sure he does—that is, if I am he.

Miss J. Win. He is kind and generous, capable of the most ardent and disinterested passion.

Young Man. It must be me.

Miss J. Win. But he has faults, great faults.

Young Man. Now I am sure 'tis me.

Miss J. Win. I dread the levity of his nature—O Manly, Manly, why cannot I trust thee?

Young Man. I am sure I can't tell.

Miss J. Win. How gladly could I owe the relief of my present afflictions to thy kindness, but for the dread of being afterwards exposed to the severer calamity of thy indifference. O why, why, Manly, cannot I confide in thee?

Young Man. (*Comes forward.*) Why, indeed! Dear, generous Julia, banish these apprehensions; I never can injure truth, innocence, and beauty like thine.

Miss J. Win. Mr Manly! How you have alarmed me! What a rash step is this—But fly, I conjure you; if you have any regard for my happiness—fly.

Young Man. Fly, Julia! Yes, swifter than a lover's thought; but you must be the partner of my flight.

Miss J. Win. You cannot surely be serious.

Young Man. So serious that I shall not stir one single step without you—Julia, Julia, this is no time for trifling or for ceremony. To be candid with you, I have overheard you, and if I deserve punishment for the involuntary offence, reserve it till the danger is over that threatens you.

Miss J. Win. Indeed, Mr Manly, your generous concern for me leaves me as little right, as I have inclination, to be severe; but therefore it is I intreat you to quit this scene of danger—You know the fury of my relations.

Young Man. Nay, Julia, I care not how soon I go—As we depart together you cannot reasonably suspect me of being an advocate for delay.

Miss J. Win. What can you mean?

Young Man. Mean! Why to decide my fate on the instant—Either to follow you as your humble slave through the wide world of happiness, for it can have no place in it forbidden to delight while you are with me, or meet with resignation, on the spot, the bitterest resentment of your vindictive family.

Miss J. Win. O Manly! give me not such a fatal proof of your affection—I will consider of your proposal by to-morrow—but go now, I beseech you.

Young Man. Not a step—If I am stubborn, Julia, you are my example. I have not often such authority for my conduct—I will not quit you till I am assured of your deliverance from this unnatural tyranny.

Miss J. Win. Hear me for a moment—I do not wish to conceal from you how much my gratitude is interested in your safety—The embarrassment of my present situation, added to this dangerous evidence of your attachment, will, I hope, in some measure, excuse me for the confession I am about to—But indeed, sir, indeed—what shall I say? A womanish apprehension prevails over my tongue,

and sways it from the direction of my heart, in spite of me—Indeed, I cannot go with you—Character, prudence, duty forbid it.

Young Man. I confess, madam, I was prepared to expect more candour, and more decision, from the lips of Miss Wingrove.

Miss J. Win. Dear Manly, I thank you for this rebuke—it brings me back to myself—something must be allowed to the fond agitation of a woman's fears—but they are gone; Love himself, unfriendly as he is to truth, yet smiles propitiously upon a slow obedience to it at last.—Meet me at one, in the avenue before our house, and then with more safety to my Henry, as well as more security to our enterprise, I will resign myself, and all my hopes, to your faithful guidance.

Young Man. Dearest Julia, on my knees I thank you—I am oppressed at once with love and gratitude—It is needless to say with what anxious, vigilant punctuality I will obey your mandate—with what idolatry of submissive affection, I will watch over every rising thought, and half-formed object, of your future life. (*Rises.*) From this moment, then, dismiss all apprehension of your Henry's levity, and be satisfied that——

Miss J. Win. I am satisfied—Surely, I have proved I am so—But interesting as your conversation always is, and on this theme fraught with peculiar endearment, I must deprive myself of it—You must go—pray obey me now—My turn for obedience approaches fast. Remember.

Young Man. Can I forget the consecrated moment! Adieu, ever dearest, till then.

Miss J. Win. Adieu, dear Manly. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

LORD DARTFORD'S *House.*

Enter LORD DARTFORD, *followed by* JENKINS.

L. Dart. Jenkins, does Sir William know of my arrival here?

Jen. He does, my Lord.

L. Dart. Well, I suppose I must pay the first visit—But hold, should not I brush up my style a little, to enable me to undergo this encounter of genealogy? No—I believe there is no occasion; the secret lies in a short compass—Pedigree's the word—and one of your real accurate lovers of historical virtu—will believe any thing—And so, we'll trust to chance, and the assistance of such convenient absurdities as may happen to arise. (*A knocking at the door.*)—But see who's there, Jenkins.

[*Jenkins goes, and introduces* SIR WILLIAM WINGROVE.

Sir W. Win. I hope, my Lord, my presence, thus unannounced, does not interrupt any of your Lordship's weightier concerns.

L. Dart. It is impossible that the favour of Sir William Wingrove's company can ever be felt as an intrusion.

Sir W. Win. Your Lordship is kindness itself—(*They sit down.*) It is a doubtful point with me, my Lord, in the alliance which is upon the eve of accomplishment, by which party the honour will be given or received.

L. Dart. So he's off already—there's but one way for me—I should ill deserve my good fortune,

Sir William, were I not sensible that the honour and the happiness are both eminently mine.

Sir W. Win. Why, my Lord, that is by no means a clear case—I perceive that your Lordship possesses a very competent knowledge of the antiquity of our family; but, to deal candidly with you, I believe yours takes its rise nearly about the same time—pretty nearly, that is to say—I mean within a century of us, or some such trifle—I dare say it does; for the Dartford family may be very clearly traced to the conquest.

L. Dart. The conquest, Sir William, is modern—It is not long since I perused a valuable manuscript, that makes very honourable mention of the Wingroves in one of the remoter reigns of the Saxon heptarchy.

Sir W. Win. Could your Lordship procure me a sight of that manuscript? The favour will be infinite.

L. Dart. Sir William may rely upon it, that if my friend can be prevailed upon to resign the parchment, I shall be happy in promoting his wish. (*Aside.*) And if he does, his politeness must positively be of a most accommodating cast, to enable him to part with what he never had.

Sir W. Win. In one of the remoter reigns of the Saxon heptarchy! Is it possible! But why not possible?—To what times may not the family of the Wingroves be traced by the laudable diligence of learned inquiry? Even up to the dark periods of early nature, of rudeness, ignorance, and barbarity, where knowledge fails us, and History herself is lost in the confusion of her materials. [*Muses.*

L. Dart. Now will he not be content till he has pursued his high birth to the illustrious parentage of a savage, and drawn the boasted stream of his

pure blood from the polluted leavings of the deluge.

Sir W. Win. Now, my Lord, to business.—The fifty thousand pounds which I purpose as my daughter's dower, is but a small, and indeed inadequate compensation for the honour of your dignified alliance—Happy, but too happy, should we all feel ourselves, if her inclinations accorded with our wishes, and acquiesced in the brilliant provision we have made for her—But she is perverse, my Lord, unaccountably perverse—Yet submit she shall, and that without delay—I am fixed, immutably fixed. But if your Lordship will do me the honour to accompany me to my house, I will there explain to your Lordship the difficulties we have to encounter, and the expedients we have provided to overcome them—Nay, my Lord.

[*Contending on the etiquette of precedency.*

L. Dart. Impossible, Sir William! mere title is adventitious, birth inherent. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

The Road, with a distant View of SIR WILLIAM WINGROVE'S *House.*

Enter Young MANLY, *singing.*

Young Man. Was there ever such a happy, unlucky dog as myself—happy beyond the narrow bounds of mortal imagination in the love of my Julia—but horribly unlucky, that the certainty and near approach of my felicity has quite bereft me of my senses—Just as I had abandoned myself to

despair, to be raised in one delicious half-hour to the summit of—O! egad there's no bearing it! I shall run mad—I am mad, that's certain.

[*Sings and dances.*

Enter ADMIRAL CLEVELAND.

Adm. Cleve. So, so—there's young frolicksome in his whirligigs—What, 'squire madcap, are you practising how to make a fool of yourself? Don't take so much trouble, young man; you can succeed pretty well without so much pains.

Young Man. Ha! my old man of war—give me your hand—When shall you and I go upon a voyage to the—

Adm. Cleve. To the moon, Eh! young freshwater? Why, you seem to be in her latitude already; or have you been stowing in a fresh lading of champagne?

Young Man. Your first conjecture is perhaps a little near the mark; for my understanding, I believe, is rather upon the go; but as for champagne —curse champagne.

Adm. Cleve. What then, you have been in a tight engagement at play, and have brought the enemy to. A'nt that it, my young shark?

Young Man. No, no, my heart of oak; I defy the power of gold to disorder my senses. But what do you think, my noble commander, of gaining the woman one loves. Can your old weather-beaten fancy conceive any joy equal to that?

Adm. Cleve. Why, I don't think I can, unless it be seeing an enemy's ship strike; and that does give the senses a whirl that none but a seaman can be a judge of.

Young Man. Why then, as I am a stranger to naval sensations, the pleasure of being beloved by an angel, must serve my turn—When conquered beau-

ty prepares to yield—when willing love strikes the flag—that's the whirl for my money.

Adm. Cleve. Well, that's good natured, however, to rejoice at the thoughts of an engagement, where you are sure to have the worst on't.

Young Man. Dear admiral, had I but known you when I was a boy.

Adm. Cleve. What then?

Young Man. Then? Do you ask me what then? O, Julia!

My soul hath her consent so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Adm. Cleve. Poor young man—well, my lad, when your wits are at anchor, though I fear the vessel's too crazy ever to see port again, you and I may drink a can together—till then, your servant.

Young Man. Nay, nay, don't go yet.

[*Dancing.*

Adm. Cleve. Why, damn you, you vere about so, one might as well look for anchorage in a whirlpool, as think to hold a parley with you.

Young Man. Well, come then, I will be serious —Do you ever pray at sea, admiral?

Adm. Cleve. Why, what should we pray for? Except, indeed, when there's danger in the wind, and then, to be sure, that alters the case.

Young Man. Well, now, there lies your error.

Adm. Cleve. Error!—meaning me. You?

Young Man. Aye!—I hold it such an abominable ignorance of duty.

Adm. Cleve. Ignorance of duty!—why, you palavering whipper-snapper, am I to be taught my duty, after having had the command of a fleet, by such a sneaking son of a whore as you?

Young Man. Nay, but why so hot, my good friend? You cannot think I meant to offend you?

Adm. Cleve. Not mean to offend, when you tell me I don't know how to command? Ignorance of duty indeed—out of my way, you live lumber—damn you, I only thought you were mad, but now I find you're a fool. [*Exit.*

Young Man. Ha! ha! ha!—At any other time I should have been a good deal vexed to have offended old True Blue, that's certain; but at this moment my heart's so crowded with sensations of mirth and joy—with such a confused jumble of contending raptures—with so much delight at what has already passed, and such a maddening anticipation of what is yet to come, that no thought of apprehensive care can obtain sanctuary in my bosom. My dear Julia, my own Julia! O! that idea overpowers me with transport—Gad so, there's Sir William—if I stay here much longer, playing the fool, I shall be observed by some of the family, and then—adieu to all my hopes—What shall I do? I'll return to the Star Inn, which is just in view of the house, and deceive the tedious interval with my companions whom I left there, till my fair day-star arises, that leads me to new life, to happiness and love. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A nearer View of SIR WILLIAM WINGROVE'*s House.* (*Moonlight.*)

Enter JULIA. *She opens the Door gently; and after an appearance of irresolution, shuts it after her. She then comes forward.*

Miss J. Win. So, now my fate's decided! What have I done?—I dare not think upon it—if Manly now deceives me, I am undone—shall I go back?—and consent to be the wife of Lord Dartford—that must follow—for but too well I know, that tenderness never yet prevailed upon the stern ambition of my father's nature. But why should I doubt my Henry's unstained honour? Though he is wild, whom did he ever wrong? Pardon, dear Manly—pardon the unjust suspicion of thy Julia—and see he comes to clear my heart of doubt.

[MANLY *sings without.*

O, gracious heaven! is this the man I've chosen to be the guardian of my honour—Fly, fly, my feet—let me but reach my father's—The door is fast; I have now no hope left, unless the wild confusion

that wine has made in him, prevent his observing me. Heaven grant it may.

[*Conceals herself behind a tree, and draws a veil over her face.*

Enter YOUNG MANLY, *singing.*

Heighten every joy to-day, and never mind to-morrow.

Aye, so say I—the present—the present is the only time that's worth a wise man's concern—why should we give ourselves any trouble about to-morrow, when we don't know that to-morrow will ever reach us?—or that we shall reach it, which is pretty nearly the same thing, I take it; and then there is just so much good care thrown away. 'Fore heaven, the man that wrote that song must have been a most profound person: that single line ought to have immortalized him—it shall be my motto. [*Sings.*

Why the plague should we be sad,
Whilst on earth we moulder;
Whether we're merry, or grave, or mad,
We every day grow older.

'Sdeath, the ground's full of rocks and quicksands, I think; my feet either sink or stumble at every step: what can be the reason? I that am so steady a goer—always, always was—all my life. Egad, I believe the thickets are going to dance. May be, they mistake me for Orpheus. Nay, gentlemen, if you pay such a compliment to my singing, I can do no less than take a turn with you—I am as frolicsome as you can be for the soul of you—so now, let me choose my partner.

[*Catches at a tree, behind which* JULIA *is concealed, who shrieks.*

By all the sylvan powers, another Daphne. [*Kneels.* Madam, behold a swain, not altogether so musical

as Apollo, I grant you, but a good honest fellow for all that—So, madam, so—psha, never mind more words—let us go.

Miss J. Win. O, my hard fortune!

Young Man. What do you say?—Speak out, my angel—I know that your voice is more tuneful than Philomel's or mine—that your eyes are the sparkling harbingers of love—that your dimples are the chosen hiding-places of all the cupids. And those lips!—but hold—rot it—I had forgot—I can't see e'er a one of them—Never mind—no matter for that—I dare say it's all true; and if it isn't, why then we must mend the matter with thinking.

Miss J. Win. O heavens! is it possible!

Young Man. No, certainly—it cannot be possible—it is'n't possible—Come, come, I know you are kind as you are beautiful, and so it is possible—and so, without more waste of time, come to my arms, and——

Miss J. Win. It is in vain to reason with him in this state—I must endeavour to divert his attention, and by that means escape him if I can. If you will permit me to be your guide—

Young Man. Enough, my pretty pilot; take me where you will. We will never part any more, shall we? No, never.

Miss J. Win. I dare say not, sir.

Young Man. Not, sir?—Why to be sure not, sir. —Never, never, never.

Miss J. Win. Let us walk quickly. (*Aside.*) O heaven, assist me!

Young Man. As quick as you please, my angel—I'll fly, if you choose, for I'm very steady, and very loving. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Wood.

Enter JULIA.

Miss J. Win. At length, thank heaven! I have escaped—escaped—but is this a place of safety? What will become of me? Yet 'tis some comfort, that the day appears—O Manly, thou hast made life hateful to me.—Who comes here?—I've surely seen his face, O! I remember I have seen him sometimes at my aunt's, with lace and gauzes—If he should not know me, perhaps I may prevail on him to conceal me—He has a wife, I know. Let me consider what I shall say to him.

Enter LARRON (*with bundles.*)

Dese villain custome-house officers give von honest man no reste—You go to bed late—you rise early—pardie—you sit up all night—it make no difference, dey vil be vid you—Ma foi, I believe dey tink sleep contrabande (*sees Julia.*) Ah! par St Dominique, here be von young ladi en great agitation. Ah! par hazard, her equipage est un peu derangé, and she be retire here till tout soit ajusté—a littel civilité de ma parte me produira peutêtre beaucoup de pratique on de ladis. En verité, de torough bred trader know how to faire son profit de chaque circonstance. Madame, excuse—but you seem beaucoup affligé—si, madame—if I can by de utmost exertion of mine contribuer en de smallest instance to votre accomodation, I shall consider de fortune vich led me dis vay, as de plus

grande felicité de ma vie, de greatest happiness of my life.

Miss J. Win. He speaks very civilly; I think I may venture to tell him so much of my unhappy situation, as may let him know how much I need his assistance.

Lar. Madam, you no ansere.—May I beg de faveur to be informé, if I can merite l'honneur de vous rendre le moindre service? Your servants, madame, ave you any littel message to convey to dem? May I hope you vill permit a me de vous escorter a votre carosse?

Miss J. Win. Sir, you mistake the matter entirely. I have neither coach, servants, nor friends at present—The cruelty of one in whom I most confided, has involved me in this calamity; and I must thankfully avail myself of your obliging offers of service, by entreating the shelter of your roof, till I can dispose of myself, so as not to be an incumbrance to any one.

Lar. Eh, my dear—vat you say? You no coche, no servantes, no friend, no house, no home, ou vant to come and live a vid me?—Non, non, ma fille—dat vill not do—non, non—Dere be de vat do you call?—de maison d'industrie, de vorkhouse for de poor girl. Personne go to my house, but such as peut faire une belle depense.

Miss J. Win. (*Aside.*) Mercenary wretch!

(*Going.*)

Lar. Holla! you little girl—you tell me, can you vorke? Suppose dat I vas to take pitie upon your condition, can you pay me vell derefor?

Miss J. Win. What shall I say? I must bear with his low impertinence, to induce him to give me a shelter. (*To Larron.*) I can, sir, embroider neatly, and make lace.

Lar. O pardie, you be von little busy bee! You can make love too. Can you not my dear?

Miss J. Win. Insupportable! If, sir, you consider the favour you seemed inclined to confer, as a sanction for your impertinent freedom, I must beg you to leave me to my misfortunes.

Lar. Comme vous voulez, ma fille—dere not be many dat vill take you in. You may meet vid some, if you stay here long, dat vill make you vorse offer.

Miss J. Win. That's too true! If I get to his house, his wife will protect me from his odious familiarity—I must try to make my peace. (*To Larron.*) Perhaps, sir, I have been too hasty. If you will conduct me to your house, I shall consider it as an obligation which I shall endeavour by my utmost industry to repay.

Lar. Ha, hah! You say so?—Vell den I vill tink about it. (*Aside.*) She poor, she pretty, she vorke. Mais elle est fierte comme une princesse—Vell, I vill have her—She be von fille dat know de vorld; it save so much trouble. She be von pauvre innocente, my glory will be de greater. (*To Julia.*) You be good girl, and I vill take you. I vill inform you vat you say to my vife as ve go along.

Miss J. Win. How one rash step has involved me in a labyrinth of difficulties. I see no end to it; yet dare not tread back the way I've gone. (*To Larron.*) Very well, sir.

Lar. Vell, you hold up your head.—You not be so cast down. Tenez—you carry dis bondel—you valk first—If you see an homme dat look like von officer des custome, you run straight forward till you come to de stile, and vait dere for me.

Miss J. Win. Excuse me, sir; I cannot consent to be employed in any unfair transaction.

Lar. Vat you not smogel for me, petite ingrate?—Must I not smogel for you? Must I not run you upon my vife? Are you not von littel

piece of contrabande vous meme? You see, my dear, you have to deal vid von bel esprit—but prenez courage, I vill not be too hard vid you. A ça—you vill do ver vell by and by. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

SIR WILLIAM WINGROVE'S *House.*

Enter MR WINGROVE.

Mr Win. How powerful is the influence of prejudice. My reason convinces me that there is no other just criterion for deciding upon the merits of men, but such as grows out of their own personal good or ill properties. If it were true, that the qualities of the parent were transmitted to the progeny, then, indeed, it might be as necessary to establish the genealogy of a man, as to ascertain the pedigree of a horse. But the properties of the mind elude the frail laws of hereditary descent, and own no sort of obedience to their authority—How is it, then, that with this distinct light before me, I cannot help falling into my father's prejudices?—I feel them to be unjust; I know them to be absurd: and yet, unjust and absurd as they are, they influence my conduct in spite of me—I love my sister—I know her affections are engaged to Young Manly—I am satisfied he is worthy of her. Yet I am adverse to the match, and conspire with my father in throwing every obstacle in the way of its completion—and in favour of whom? Of Lord Dartford—a man void of feeling, sentiment, or sincerity—uniting in him every contradiction of depravity; cold, gay, ostentatious, and

interested—But he is a man of birth—Despicable distinction!

Enter O'DONNELL.

O'Don. O, sir, sir!—my young master—the house is in an uproar, sir, sir.

Mr Win. Well, sir, what's the matter?

O'Don. O! I don't know what's the matter, sir; my young lady's the matter, sir—we're all undone, sir—She's gone, sir—Nobody knows where, sir.

Mr Win. My sister gone! impossible—Degenerate Julia! Is it thus you reward the kind, the anxious zeal of your friends to place you in a situation worthy the exalted regard they entertained for you; to throw yourself away upon the mean pretensions of a plebeian——But where is my father?—Let me fly to him with the news of this disaster. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR WILLIAM, *with servants.*

Sir W. Win. I'll not believe that she is gone—gone! What!—my daughter eloped at midnight! Go all of you and search again. I am certain she is hid somewhere.

O'Don. Suppose your honour then was to order the canal and the fish-ponds to be searched, for I am certain if she be hid, it must be at the bottom of one of them.

Sir W. Win. Be dumb, horrible brute. Would you have me think—Did I ever give her cause—Was I not ever the fondest of parents?

O'Don. Sartinly, your honour meant it all for her good. But when a young lady finds nothing to plase her in this world, she is apt sometimes to take a peep into the other to try the difference.

Sir W. Win. Begone, I say—find her, or I'll discharge you all for your negligence in suffering her to escape. (*Exit O'Donnel and servants.*) The

conjectures of this blundering blockhead terrify me. I hope Julia has not in a fit of rash perverseness—Yet I think her piety—

Re-enter MR WINGROVE.

Well, William, any news of your sister.

Mr Win. No, sir, no news, but of her dishonour—disgraceful girl!

Sir W. Win. O'Donnel alarms me exceedingly—he thinks that in a phrenzy of disappointed passion she has———

Mr Win. No, my dear sir, Julia is not so weary of life—The porter tells me he found all the doors leading to the road unbarred this morning. Would I could discover whether she had a companion in her flight—If she be not recovered speedily, the disgrace will be indelible—Lord Dartford will be here soon. What shall we say to him? O! shameless Julia.

Sir W. Win. Forbear, my son—these violent transports distress me even more than your sister's flight—Consider that it is through you the pure blood of our family must descend to posterity—that through you the name of Wingrove must be transmitted to ages as distant and unknown as those from whence it sprung. Reflect a little, my son, bring reason to your aid, and consider how trifling and insignificant are the misfortunes of your sister, compared to objects so important and so sacred as these. Be calm then, William.

Mr Win. I will endeavour it, sir.

Sir W. Win. If you were to go to Miss Herbert's, her acquaintance is so extensive, you perhaps may obtain some information of Julia there. Go, go, my son.

Mr Win. I obey you, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter O'DONNEL.

O'Don. Lord Dartford, your honour.

Sir W. Win. He has not been informed of my daughter's absence?

O'Don. No, your honour; not a syllable has been spoken to him since he entered the house.

Sir W. Win. Where is he now?

O'Don. In the saloon, sir, in arnest discourse with your honour's chaplain.

Sir W. Win. Blockhead! I'll go to him then.

[*Exit.*

O'Don. O! 'tis a pretty blundering piece of business, fait. Devil burn me, but if I didn't tink how it would end. There's nothing so sure to make a young lady run away, as keeping her fast by the heels. O! if I had a wife that I wanted to get rid of, fait, I would keep here safe under lock and key.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

MISS HERBERT'S *House.*

Enter MISS HERBERT, *and* MRS RACHEL CLEVELAND.

Miss Her. Miss Wingrove eloped, aunt? Heaven grant it may be true! and that those to whom she has fled for refuge may be sensible of her merit—though I think I can guess the person.

Mrs R. Cleve. I have heard it supposed that young Mr Manly had a place in her affections—if he is the protector she has made choice of, I fear

the lady's character and the young man's life are in equal danger.

Miss Her. The adventure wears a much less formidable aspect to me, I confess, provided she escapes her father's pursuit—O! how I shall enjoy the vexation of Sir William and his son, at finding all the views of their persecuting ambition thus happily disappointed.

Mrs R. Cleve. Nay, Harriet, now I think you do not speak with your usual sincerity—Mr Wingrove I am persuaded is not indifferent to you.

Miss Her. Dear aunt, you are partly right, and partly wrong. Mr Wingrove has, I acknowledge, touched my heart a little, but the contagion has not yet made its way to my head—for though the little god may have thrown away upon me an idle arrow, or so, he has kept his bandage as an embellishment to his own person: I can see the failings of my swain as well as another.

Mrs R. Cleve. You're a mad girl.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Mr Wingrove, madam.

Miss Her. Desire him to walk up.

[*Exit Servant.*

Now I must teaze him a little—do not oppose me, my dear aunt. I've a mind to lead him to believe that his sister is under my protection—this will serve her, by stopping further pursuit for a while, and at the same time put him into a most entertaining rage with me.

Enter Mr Wingrove.

But, dear madam, have you been kind enough to see that every avenue to the east wing of the house is secured?—Has good care been taken that the postern gate at the lower end of the western

parterre is properly fastened?—Are the man traps all ready for snapping?—Are the spikes new sharpened on the south wall?—Have orders been given, that if any of the inquisitive family of the Wingroves—O Mr Wingrove!—you come upon one so suddenly—but I am overjoyed to see you, sir.

Mr Win. I am bound in politeness, madam, to return the compliment; yet, after what I heard at my entrance, there would perhaps have been no great offence to truth, if the joy had been suppressed on both sides.

Miss Her. You do well, sir, not to express more than you feel.

Mr Win. If I did, madam, it appears I should not want a precedent for my justification.

Miss Her. But why, Mr Wingrove, if, as you are constantly telling one, I use you so very, very ill, why will you throw yourself perpetually in my way?—I don't recollect that I sent for you—Did I, aunt? Did any body go to desire dear Mr Wingrove to come to us?—I forget, I vow.—And yet perhaps I might—for I know it does him a world of good, poor dear man!—He is fond of primitive times, and, like all your good people of those days, loves to throw himself in the way of a little wholesome persecution—But now, sir, answer me this, you unjust—you ungrateful man, you—Did I ever disappoint you whenever you came here for a little healthful mortification in a morning?—Was I ever the person to send you away without your errand? No, sir, with all your malice, I defy you to lay that to my charge.

Mr Win. Madam, I have many obligations to be sure to the gentleness of your nature; but I entreat you not to add one more to the many kindnesses I do owe it, that of driving me to distraction—Will

you have the goodness to answer me, madam—Is not my sister here?

Miss Her. Bless me, sir, and suppose she is—But it is all of a piece—You set out with informing me you were very sorry to see me, and now you would forbid me all intercourse with the only part of your family I have any desire to be acquainted with.

Mr Win. Let me conjure you, my dear lovely tyrant, not to play with my anxiety—suspend a while the triumphs of your sarcasm, you cannot misunderstand the agitations of my heart at this moment—you know the cause of them—if you have given my sister an asylum——

Miss Her. Then, sir, with equal solemnity, I desire you to believe, that if I have given your sister the shelter you imagine, I shall not withdraw it to gratify the prejudices of any of her relations; besides, sir, were your sister assured she should be secure from the odious danger that threatens her from a man she detests, she would, I am convinced, be happy to throw herself at her father's feet, and on that condition——

Mr Win. It is a condition, however, that will not be granted her, madam. What, when our honour, when the dignity of our house, are committed—shall all be sacrificed to the frivolous partiality of a disobedient girl.

Miss Her. Give me leave, sir, to tell you that you seem to me to mistake this honour for which you declaim so warmly; honour holds no society with injustice.

Mr Win. Injustice, madam!

Miss Her. Yes, sir, there can be no injustice equal to that of compelling a woman to so sacred a connection as a married union against the known and settled preference of her heart. It is, besides,

sir, acting a very ungenerous part towards Lord Dartford himself.

Mr. Win. Not at all, madam; Lord Dartford knows of her aversion, and has spirit enough to disregard it.

Miss Her. Does he, sir; then indeed there can be no doubt, with all due deference to his spirit, but he merits it. But in the meantime, Mr Wingrove, permit me to embrace the very earliest opportunity of expressing my gratitude for this new philosophy you have been kind enough to teach us. You are the first lover, I believe, that ever told his mistress to her face, that a union of the affections was a superfluous ingredient in the composition of matrimony—You made the discovery, sir—You will leave it to me to make the proper use of it.

Mr Win. Nay, madam, if you are determined to make no other use of what I say, but to pervert it into ridicule or injury, I know nothing that's left me, but to use the only privilege, which I think you will not deny me, that of making a speedy departure. I have long despaired of exciting any sympathy in you towards myself; yet the distresses of an afflicted brother, I had fondly believed, would have inclined you to forbearance at least, if they had failed to produce any more active effect upon your humanity. [*Exit.*

Miss Her. Haughty to the last—Well, thank heaven! this interview is over. Julia, I have fought hard for you.

Mrs R. Clev. Indeed, my dear niece, you carry matters too far; you will certainly lose Mr Wingrove some of these days, if you persevere in your present treatment of him.

Miss Her. No, my dear madam—certainly no—The symptoms of love vary with the difference of constitution, and in a lively nature there is no surer

proof of it, than a little playful malignity—and that the man ought to have sense enough to understand; or, wanting that, I am sure he has too little to entitle him to become the lord and master of a young woman of my spirit and pretensions.

Mrs R. Clev. Aye, but have a care, Harriet.

Miss Her. Well, madam, I'll do my best—but, indeed, if I cannot laugh and teaze him out of some of his faults, we shall make a miserable couple. I can be a willing slave to a gentle master, but I should prove a most rebellious subject to a tyrant, I am certain. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Mr Manly's.

Enter Young Manly.

Young Man. Heigho! What is't o'clock, I wonder? My head aches horridly—perhaps a little tea timely administered will set all to rights; we'll try.

Enter William.

William, how came I to have no better accommodation than the sopha last night?—I suppose I was a little gone, but you might have put me to bed, sirrah.

Will. Sir, you know I was'nt at home, you employed me elsewhere.

Young Man. Elsewhere? Hang me, if I remember—why, how did I employ you?

Will. You know, sir, when I called upon you at the Star Inn, you sent me to hire a little vessel to carry you and Miss Wingrove to France.

Young Man. Miss Wingrove and me to France! —peace, you profane rascal.

Will. Dear sir, I wonder you should forget— You know you was almost beside yourself for joy yesterday, and told me that Miss had consented to be yours, and that you should marry her in France first, for fear of accidents; and then you bid me hire a good tight vessel, and to tell the master, that if he would bring to, in the west creek, and put to sea directly upon your getting on board, you would give him a hundred gu neas as soon as he had landed you upon the coast of France.

Young Man. Eh!—how?—Miss Wingrove—coast of France!

Will. But it growing day-light, and the captain getting sulky, thinking as I had made a fool of him, I made the best of my way home to see what was the matter, and now it's all the talk this morning that Miss Wingrove is run away.

Young Man. What's that? Julia left her father's! —And where is she? Tell me this instant.

Will. Dear heart, sir! why, how should I know? I thought she had been with you.

Young Man. This is most unintelligible—William, are you sure I am awake now? Don't laugh, you rascal—Speak, fool, are you certain I am awake, I say—I believe I had better convince myself by beating the fellow handsomely—what say you, sir?

Will. Why, sir, only—that if it be the same thing to your honour, I would as lieve you would be so good as try some other experiment.

Young Man. Heavens! what a confusion of horrors breaks in upon my mind—My Julia fled, and I not the partner of her flight. O! I dare not speak my apprehensions even to myself! If they are true, I am undone—Wretch that I am, were that all, it would be a trifle; but, Julia, my life, my

soul, my love, I have ruined thee. I feel it all come rushing o'er my mind; yet still it has the wildness of a dream—I recollect something of a fair creature weeping and entreating me to let her go —Was it possible, that in any state I could let her sue in vain!

Will. I hope, sir, you'll forgive me for being so bold, but I am afraid Miss and you have had some difference.

Young Man. What's that to you, sir?—Contemptible villain that I am, I blush that my own servant should guess at my conduct—Yet she has escaped Lord Dartford—How know I what she has escaped, or what endured? Those heavenly charms of hers may have exposed her to worse than robbery! Yet surely her melodious tongue would subdue a tiger!—Did it soften thee, thou more obdurate far than any other of thy kindred savages in the forest?—And yet 'tis hard—'Twas to her own dear health I sacrificed my reason—O Julia!—if I had loved thee less, I had not deserved to have lost thee—Perhaps William might get some intelligence —I cannot let him know how I have acted—Selfish wretch, dost thou start at shame?—May he not bring word where she has taken refuge—Possibly I can serve her—not for myself—I renounce all hope —Yet if I can but serve her—William.

Will. Sir.

Young Man. I have behaved like a scoundrel, William—worse than a brute. I went to meet Miss Wingrove, and you find how I qualified myself to be her protector. Where she is, I know not—Go, inquire, good William—and be speedy—Go to her father's—everywhere—and bring me word before I'm quite distracted—Stay, I'll go too—we'll divide, and meet at the post-house an hour hence.

Will. Sir, you're so much flurried, you had better stay here till I come back.

Young Man. Don't talk, sir,—And do you hear? —Take care you don't get drunk, sir—I know your failing, rascal; but when matters of importance are in agitation, none—no, none but a scoundrel like myself would degrade his nature by basely unfitting it for all the functions which render it either useful or respectable. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

LARRON'S *House.*

Enter Mrs LARRON *and* JULIA.

Mrs Lar. So, my pretty young madam, I have found you out, have I? But I guessed how it was from the first, hussey.

Miss J. Win. Is there any thing I can say that will convince you?

Mrs Lar. Why no, to be sure there an't—Don't you think as all you says must go for nothing, after all that fine masquerading story trumped up between my husband and you? He said you was just com'd out of a nunnery. What sort of a nunnery was it, I wonder?

Miss J. Win. Good madam, let me prevail on you to listen to my unhappy story.

Mrs Lar. Well, child, you may go on, I hears you.

Miss J. Win. Your husband found me this morning, deprived (by a most unlooked-for accident) of friends, of home, of every thing.

Mrs Lar. You must be a good un by that—Well, let's hear—go on, child.

Miss J. Win. I made him acquainted with my distress, and he agreed to afford me shelter, till I could form some plan, adapted to my melancholy situation.

Mrs Lar. And so you'd have me believe, as you and my husband knowed nothing of one another before this morning? Hey!

Miss J. Win. I can solemnly assure you, that this morning was the first of our acquaintance.

Mrs Lar. Well, have a care that you doesn't equiviokit now—If I finds you equivikiting, you shall dearly repent it, I promise you—And so you says as you wants work—Why, if I thought you would behave yourself as you should do, may be I'd find you a friend myself, that wou'dn't require much of you; and I suppose you don't care how little you does—But I should like to know how you lost your last friend.

Miss J. Win. Let me entreat you, madam, to spare me upon that point.

Mrs Lor. Aye, you none on you likes to tell—I suppose it wa'n't for no good as he turned you off. (JULIA *turns aside and weeps.*) What a poor little whimpering thing it is—I wonders where she can have been, as I have never seen her afore—If I can get her off to old 'Squire Manly, who is a little like my husband for goodness, it will be putting her out of Larron's way, and be something into my pocket—Well, well, adone crying, do—I suppose you're not so dilliket as to object to a middle-aged gentleman.

Miss J. Win. Has he any family, madam?

Mrs Lar. O, yes—he's a son and a daughter, and a wife into the bargain—but you know that's no hobsticle to the likes of you.

Miss J. Win. Quite the contrary, madam; I am glad to hear it.

Mrs Lar. Well, that's as much as ever I hard—But that's none of my business.

Miss J. Win. Is the gentleman an embroiderer, madam, or what?

Mrs Lar. Embroiderer? No; the gentleman's a gentleman.

Miss J. Win. Then, madam, I should prefer going into a family where I might be useful, rather than to become an idle dependant on any one.

Mrs Lor. What the deuce is in the wind now, I wonders? Well, the gentleman is an embroiderer; so let's have no more of your hums and haws, but get up to your own room, and be sure you doesn't stir till I calls you. [*Exit* JULIA. If I can tell what to make of her, she's so full of her fine words, and things—As I lives, there's the old squire going by; I'll bring him back. Mr Manly, Mr Manly—It's a pity he's so old; for he has faults enough to make him agreeable to any woman.

Enter OLD MR MANLY.

So you forgets your old acquaintance, sir; I warn't worth thinking on; you goes by the door, without ever axing how one does.

Old Man. What, do you think I can ever forget my durable blossom of five-and-forty.

Mrs Lar. Forty! Lord, sir, why you reckons every body's years by your own lady's—I shan't be the age you mention these five years.

Old Man. You mean you hav'n't been the age I mention these five years—The register can add nothing to the evidence of your face—which proclaims fifty as strongly as if it was in black and white in the parish books.

Mrs Lar. Ah ! you're a merry man. No wonder madam is so jealous of you.

Old Man. To tell you the truth, Mrs Larron, I never thought of roving till she put it in my head by her doubts of my constancy.

Mrs Lar. Why, sir, contradiction's as natural to gentlemen as to ladies, for any thing as I see —— Now there is up stairs——

Old Man. What, what is there up stairs ?

Mrs Lar. As pretty a young creter as ever you set eyes on.

Old Man. Let me go and look at her directly.

Mrs Lar. Nay, but stay—She's as full of freaks as she can hold. I hardly knows how to deal with her—She says she wants to work at embroidering—But that's all a pertence—Howsoever, I must tell her at first you wants to employ her that way.——I'll bring her down in a minute. [*Exit.*

Old Man. Hang her—I wish she had not called me in. I begin to be too old for these follies ; I have half a mind to be off—But when a man has continued in a bad practice for a length of time, it almost costs him as much shame to make good a reformation, as it did at first to venture on the transgression—But I hear a lighter foot on the stair-case than Dame Larron's ; and so for the present, good-bye morality—We'll call upon you another time.

Enter Miss Julia Wingrove *and* Mrs Larron.

Old Man. By all that's lovely, an angel ! (*starts.*) Miss Wingrove.

Miss J. Win. Mr Manly !

Old Man. Madam, you must think it very odd —very strange, I say, and very odd—to see me here upon such an occasion—Appearances, I con-

fess, make against me.—Yet upon a proper explanation, madam, I don't fear being able to set all to rights.

Miss J. Win. Sir, to see you here was what indeed I did not expect—By some means, I find the place of my concealment is discovered—But, sir, though I cannot deem it otherwise than amiable in you, to attempt some apology for the conduct of your son, yet I must tell you, in the anguish of my heart, that I would sooner become the wife of the man I once most abhorred, than unite myself to him, or even listen to the smallest palliation of his perfidy—And now, sir, excuse my abrupt departure. [*Exit.*

Old Man. Why, Mrs Larron, are we awake here?——Is there nothing of enchantment in all this? Egad, I hope it's no trick of yours, mistress.

Mrs Lar. Trick?—Deuce take me if I knows of any; I hav'n't been able to find what you and she meant, for my part.

Old Man. As to what she meant, that does not appear so difficult to unravel—How she came here is what puzzles me.

Mrs Lar. Why, my husband brought her—He found her like a strayed sheep, and so seized her for his own.

Old Man. Your husband must be a courageous sort of a man, I think, to steal a young lady of her pretensions—And you're a pretty gentlewoman, to come and draw a man in to make a fool of himself—Here did I expect to find a pretty little good-humoured, good-natured, insignificant sort of a good-for-nothing play-thing; when, instead of that, I am exposed to encounter the reproachful glances of Miss Julia Wingrove.

Mrs Lar. Miss Wingrove! my stars! Why, is

she the runaway lady that all the country's up in arms about? (*Aside.*) I am glad to hear this. Well, sir, I'm a little in a hurry, and so I knows you'll excuse me.

Old Man. O, with all my soul—I can find excuses enough for going away: the only difficulty is, how to discover an apology for coming in. [*Exit.*

Mrs Lar. Well, sure some luck'll come of this at last. Who'd have thought she'd been such a proud man's daughter, so as she be-humbled herself to me. I hope she ha'n't given me the slip, though—if she is fairly out of the house, I dares not follow her. But I warrant she's gone back to the room—she's too genteel to have sense enough to take care of herself. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

MANLY'S *House.*

Enter MRS *and* MISS MANLY.

Mrs Man. Surely, Emma, it was very indiscreet to give Mr Welford permission to wait on you, at a time when your brother and he are at variance.

Miss Man. Well, madam, let him be refused admittance. I find every caprice of Henry's is to be complied with, however it may interfere with any prospects of mine. But I dare say he will have the goodness to repay your tenderness with his usual gratitude; for, if I mistake not, there is some new adventure in agitation.

Mrs Man. Don't speak with so much asperity of your brother, Emma: if I seem to feel a particular interest about him, it is not that I entertain a great-

er affection for Henry than I do for you; but where a young man's imprudences are constantly exposing him to danger, there the anxiety of common humanity is added to the apprehension of motherly affection; so that it is only the same regard more powerfully awakened, and pity taking part with duty. But what makes you imagine that he is at present engaged in some new adventure?

Miss Man. Indeed, my dear madam, I am sorry I spoke so harshly; but my reason for apprehending that he has some wild scheme on foot, is, that yesterday evening his servant told my maid, that his master would soon be a happy man. William staid out all night; and this morning they went abroad with a sort of mystery together, when William told my woman, that his young master had, according to custom, been cutting out vexation for himself.

Mrs Man. Never, sure, had any woman so much to disturb her peace as I have! What with Harry's imprudence, and Mr Manly's neglect of me, it is a miracle how I support it.

Miss Man. Dear madam, your own apprehensions create all your affliction in that quarter. Indeed, I have heard my father say as much.

Mrs Man. What, could he not be satisfied with disregarding me himself, but he must endeavour to prejudice your mind against me?

Miss Man. O, you mistake my father's meaning entirely, madam. He was only lamenting your want of confidence in him, and saying, that had he never been causelessly suspected, he should never have given you cause of suspicion.

Mrs Man. So, then, he owns he has wronged me? He confesses his infidelity, and makes no scruple of avowing it to you too. This is beyond even what I ever supposed. I did, indeed, think there was a little inconstancy in his nature. I

confess I had some slight suspicions of that sort. Now I find I am justified in all my conjectures. O Mr Manly, you have much to answer for on my account.

Miss Man. I hope not, my dear mother—I am sure he always speaks of you with great tenderness.

Mrs Man. Does he, my dear Emma? Well, and what does he say?

Miss Man. I have heard him say, madam, that could you but confide in him, you would be one of the happiest couples in the world.

Mrs Man. And did he, indeed, my dear girl, say this? Don't you flatter me now, my child?

Miss Man. Be assured, madam, that he said every syllable I have related to you.

Mrs Man. How could I ever make him uneasy?

Enter OLD MANLY.

Old Man. Mrs Manly, my dear—Emma, my child, have you heard—

Miss Man. O yes, sir, that Miss Wingrove has left her father's, and my mother is alarmed, lest my brother—

Old Man. No, no, my dear, I can ease you of your apprehensions respecting Henry: Miss Wingrove is not with him, I can assure you.

Mrs Man. How do you know that, my dear Mr Manly?

Old Man. Why, I saw her about an hour ago.

Mrs Man. You saw Miss Wingrove! you surprise me! Where?

Old Man. At Mr Larron's.

Mrs Man. And pray, Mr Manly, what business carried you there?

Old Man. No, 'twas not at Mr Larron's neither —yes, now I recollect, it was there too.

Mrs Man. 'Tis very strange, Mr Manly, that you should be at such a loss to know where it was you saw her.

Old Man. Why, I remember now very well, it was at Mrs Larron's; I happened to be there, and she came in—psha!—how I blunder—I mean she went in there, and—

Mrs Man. You followed her—yes, I begin to guess how it was.

Old Man. This is ever the way! Perpetually cross-examined, and contradicted.

Mrs Man. It is you that contradict yourself, Mr Manly.

Old Man. Why, will you give me leave to tell my own story my own way?

Mrs Man. Another time, sir; it will be better policy to determine what way you choose to tell your stories, before you begin to relate them: you will be less perplexed—less puzzled with the variety of your inventions. But, pray, let us hear the sequel.

Old Man. Nay, you may guess the remainder; if you will not listen to the beginning of my story, I'll be cursed if you shall hear the conclusion of it. [*Exit.*

Mrs Man. O Emma, child! what a life is mine, just to be relieved from one apprehension, by being plunged into another! Who could have believed your father would so forget himself as to seduce—

Miss Man. Dear madam, 'tis impossible your fears should be true. If you will give me leave, I'll follow my father—I dare say he will acquaint me with the whole affair.

Mrs Man. Go, my dear Emma, go. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

An Inn.

Enter YOUNG MANLY.

Young Man. No tidings to be gained of my Julia: where can she be? wandering perhaps—perhaps—O, I dare not trust myself with the suggestions of my own thoughts! How shall I avoid them. O Manly! thou wert to have met a trembling angel, kindly ready to have thrown herself into thy arms for ever—and—

Enter WILLIAM.

Will, what news? does she live? where is she? is she married?

Will. Sir, I hope at last to bring some comfort.

Young Man. Honest William! well, your news, my good friend.

Will. About half an hour ago I began to be quite out of hope; but, thinks I, I'll not return to master till I've got some account to carry him, come on it what will.

Young Man. That's a good fellow; well.

Will. And so I went from barbers to barbers, and from bakers to bakers, and from inn to inn, and from alehouse to alehouse.

Young Man. Are you sure you have not been drinking, Will? If you have, you know it's what I've sworn never to forgive.

Will. Lord, sir, drinking? No, sir, no more than

in a reasonable way—not to disguise myself, an like your honour.

Young Man. Tell me of my Julia, you block-head.

Will. Why, your honour's so touchy, you see; if you'd ha' been pleased to have heard me.

Young Man. Well, well, that's a good Will—go on—go on.

Will. Well, pray, sir, be pacified. Well, and so, sir, as I was sitting at the Fox and Gridiron in West-lane, who should come in promiscuously, but Larron the smuggler, as conceited as you please—so I never much cared for having any talk with the fellow, being as he's a foreigner, and a great rogue. However, thinks I, all your French folk have woundy long tongues, and if he knows any thing, fifty to one but he pops it out.

Young Man. Psha! Curse your tedious introductions.

Will. So says I—Mr Larron, have you heard what a stir there is in our village—such-a-to-do—

Young Man. Pish—go on—I say—go on.

Will. There—there's a young lady lost, says I—Wee, says he, and there be young one ladi found too.

Young Man. What's that!—go on, good William.

Will. What, says I, have you had the luck to find her then, says I—Wee, says he again, spluttering out a French oath, and she have the luck to find me as well—Oh ho, says I, you'd make me believe that she run away for your sake, would you? Make a believe, says he, she not be the first young ladi that run away for my sake. Young ladies have droll fancies then, says I. But mayhap she may'nt be the same that all the rout is about—she that I mean is a raw-boned gawky girl, pretty round

shouldered (just to sift him you see, sir,)—Round shoulder, says he, round shoulder. More blue—She one model—she von Venus.—So then I knew we were right, for I've heard your honour say Miss was as like Venus as two pease.

Young Man. Will, you have conducted the whole affair like a complete orator, and profound politician.

Will. Very like, sir; but had'nt we better go after Miss for fear of her father's getting her back again.

Young Man. Certainly—yet now that my fears for her safety are somewhat abated, the recollection of my offence places itself between us as an insurmountable obstacle to our ever meeting again.

Will. Lord, sir, why to my thinking you had better go and ask her pardon, and then there'll be an end on't.

Young Man. Never—I can never think of asking her to pardon me.

Will. Why, dear sir, how hard-hearted you are.

Young Man. (*Speaking to himself without regarding the presence of his servant.*) I have given her such cause of resentment, that it would be an affront to her justice, as well as her delicacy, even to supplicate forgiveness.

Will. Aye, aye, see what good'll come of these megrims.

Young Man. Any common penitent may look with a rational confidence for pardon; but he who has sinned against the sanctity of beauty, and the religion of a sworn and plighted affection, cannot, ought not, to expect forgiveness——

Will. Nay sure, sir, do listen to a——

Young Man. But come—Though I must now for ever forego the dear hope of calling Julia mine, yet if she will but suffer me to possess the soothing

reflection of having rescued her from the persecutions of her family, I will bear my loss without a murmur, and resign my future days to patient suffering and unavailing regret—Follow me, sirrah! [*Exit.*

Will. Certainly, sir—how difficult it is to make two people think alike in this world—I cannot bring myself to be of my master's mind for the soul of me. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

A Wood.

Enter MR WELFORD.

Wel. What an unlucky fellow thou art, Welford—Here have I, by my Emma's order, been wandering this hour in pursuit of Manly—One would think that he knew my intentions, and had hid himself to avoid me—Ha! who can this be whose looks betray so much agitation and distress? The grief must be of magnitude indeed that thus presents itself to the licentious comment of every unfeeling passenger—What can be the cause that has reduced loveliness like this (*retires*) to so cruel an affliction?

Enter JULIA.

Miss J. Win. Whither shall I fly?—What refuge is there left me—injured—insulted—pursued—persecuted every way—what more could vice itself endure? And what indeed have I not sustained of its torments, saving only the pang of consciousness. Yet that's something—Whither shall I now direct

my trembling feet? Where, where hope to meet a friend?

Wel. That friend is made, madam, if he's happy enough to be accepted—Pardon me for thus intruding on your griefs, and only rejoice me by saying in what way I can be accessary to your service.

Miss J. Win. May I believe you, sir? I have of late been so much the sport of cruelty, that I dare hardly think any one sincere that approaches me with the voice of kindness—Yet your countenance indicates compassion.

Wel. It would be false to my nature, madam, if it indicated any thing less on the present occasion. But, madam, you talked of being pursued—If so—permit me for the present to conduct you to my house—I have some female relations there, with whom a temporary residence can reflect no disgrace to your reputation—May I, madam, be favoured by your compliance.

Miss J. Win. My tears must thank you, sir—I have no words to do it.

Wel. This way if you please, madam. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

LARRON'S *House.*

Enter MR LARRON, *and* YOUNG MANLY.

Lar. Sir, vat you vant? Pardie vat you make noise at my house—de house in England you call de chateau, de castel—vat you mean, you besiege my castel, sir?—Vat you vant, hey?

Young Manly. Want!—must I repeat it to you

a hundred times, you blockhead? I want Miss Wingrove—where is she? Miss Wingrove, sir, Miss Wingrove, is the fellow dumb? Produce Miss Wingrove—produce the young lady you brought home this morning—let me see her instantly.

Lar. De young ladi, qui m'acompagnoit ce matin, vat right have you to make question of me, sir? I know noting of de young ladi—I no lock de ladi up, Monsieur—You say she Miss Wingrove. If Miss Wingrove shose rader to come to my house den go to her fader's, ce n'est pas ma faute; if she take into her head to go away again, ce n'est pas ma faute neider.

Young Man. I would advise you, sir, not to be altogether so indifferent upon this occasion—You may not perhaps be aware that I possess a most excellent remedy for a certain complaint, called in your country *sang froid*—and if your symptoms should continue so very alarming, I fancy I shall feel myself under the necessity of applying it.

[*Showing his cane.*

Lar. Monsieur! you not take a me right—my deficience of de langue Angloise must, s'il vous plait, be mon excuse—Veritablement, I not know vere de young ladi be more den yourself, sir. Vous plait-il, you please to make demande of my vife.

Enter Mrs Larron.

Monsieur, elle aura peutetre so much complaisance for you to inform of de cause of de ladi's departure, but pour moi, she vil not have de condescension de m'instruire pas un seul syllable.

Young Man. Well, Mrs Larron, you hear I am referred to you, will you favour me with some account of Miss Wingrove?

Mrs Lar. Dear heart a day—Here's a racket

and a fuss indeed! I wishes she'd been fur enough before she set her foot within my doors, I knows.

Young Man. Nay, but Mrs Larron, I must know immediately where she is.

Mrs Lar. Must you, sir?—Why then you must know more than I can tell you—Your father came to visit her.

Young Man. My father!

Mrs Lar. Yes, sir—and so she went away—that's all I knows.

Young Man. Did she go with him?

Mrs Lar. Why, yes, sir—I suppose so—Lord, you axes one so many questions.

Young Man. My dear Mrs Larron, why wouldn't you make me happy sooner by saying so at once.

Mrs Lar. Lord, one should have a fine life on't, indeed, if one was to do nothing but make every body happy.

Young Man. Your economy in that respect, madam, is at least good natured to your visitors, and as I have no inclination to disturb so laudable a cruelty, I will wish you a good morning. [*Exit.*

Mrs Lar. And a good riddance of you then, if you goes to that. This comes all along with you, Larron, I'm sure I may say it's a judgment upon you for thinking to serve me so.

Lar. It be von judgment done upon ma follie to keep in de house von termagant like yourself—De young ladi like ver well to come to my house—She beg, she pray to come—I bring her to you—I leave her vid you—Vat she do den? Ma foi, she run away directiment.

Mrs Lar. Was it so indeed? And so I was in madam's way, was I? O, this is pretty usage, indeed! to me who have been the making of you.

Lar. You not hold your tongue, begar, I tourne you of doors, tout de suite.

Mrs Lar. You turn me out of doors, Larron? I dares you to do it—You knows as I knows enough to hang you if I pleases—You forgets who broke open———

Lar. Vat you keep quarrel, quarrel for? You know I not like the quarrel—You and I be good friend—A ça—Give me your hand—pardie—I vill set all right—I vill make you my vife.

Mrs. Lar. Will you? But I am grown a little too wise for that now; I sees your aim well enough, you only wants to get clear of my evidence, and to have the law of your side, for using me ill—No, no, Lewis, I am not such a fool as you thinks me.

Lar. Vill any ting please you? You juste now complain———

Mrs Lar. Aye, but now, d'ye see, I will keep my freedom as security for your good behaviour—You are in my power now, and so I will keep you—I knows you have no love for me, but I will make you fear me.

Lar. Eh bien, my dear, we understand von anoder now—you now be ma maistresse en toutes choses et pour toujours.

Mrs Lar. What's that you are jabbering?

Lar. I say, my dear, dat you are so convince me of your great discretion dat you now be my mistress in all tings, and for ever.

Mrs Lar. O! why that's very well—come into dinner then like a good creter as you are, and never, my dear Lewis, never, never forget, that it is in my power to hang you. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

MISS HERBERT'S *House.*

Enter MISS HERBERT *and* LORD DARTFORD.

Miss Her. I am happy to see your Lordship—I hope you bring good tidings of Miss Wingrove.

L. Dart. Indeed, my dear madam, you flatter yourself and me. I was sent here in pursuit of good tidings, or of any tidings—for after the most prodigal expense of bodily fatigue, we are just as much in the dark as ever.

Miss Her. What, no intelligence?

L. Dart. None—none—I have just left her fantastic father, and her imperious brother, almost as anxiously on the hunt for this modern relation, as if they were persecuting an old parchment, to bring forth a lurking morsel of ancient kindred in the reign of king Lud, or queen Boadicea. It is very unaccountable.

Miss Her. Unaccountable indeed!

L. Dart. I mean every way unaccountable—the motives that could have led to her escape, as well as the success with which she has accomplished it.

Women are not apt to misunderstand their happiness in these matters—I cannot lay that to their charge, positively.

Miss Her. (*Aside.*) Coxcomb!—a thought occurs to me, by which if I succeed I shall be better enabled to reconcile matters with my haughty lover, and rescue Julia from her embarrassments, should she be discovered—I'll make him believe I have a fancy for him myself. (*To Lord Dartford.*) Indeed, my Lord, as your Lordship very justly observes, women are but seldom guilty of such extravagant inattention to their own interests—giddy girl!—what would she have aspired to?—such rank—such accomplishments.

L. Dart. Yes—and such a rooted, such a disinterested, such an inviolable attachment.

Miss Her. To be sure, my Lord. Obdurate Julia! Where were your eyes? Where was your sensibility? Where had you mislaid your understanding?

L. Dart. Very true! Where indeed? I that lived but for her.

Miss Her. That an affection so ardent—a constancy so noble, should receive so ill a return—unkind Miss Wingrove. [*Sighs heavily.*

L. Dart. Eh! What's this?—I begin to perceive something here, and the best on it is, she has a better fortune than the other—I wish I had not talked so much of my constancy. I must wheel about though. (*To Miss Herbert.*) And yet, Miss Herbert, I cannot help thinking, that latterly Miss Wingrove hardly appeared to me to preserve that——

Miss Her. No, indeed, my Lord—I have partly thought so too.

L. Dart. That kind of suavity, as it were—that inexpressible something.

Miss Her. That plaintive delicacy—that depre

cating eye—those imploring smiles—that persuasion which carried with it the authority of conquest, and that gentle command which turned enforced captivity into voluntary submission. (*Aside.*) Dear girl, I cannot help doing her justice in the very heat of this feigned hostility.

L. Dart. And then her spirits—have somehow or other——

Miss Her. Yes, her spirits too have lost that elegant dejection, that pensive apathy—that graceful mope—if one may so express it, that used to shed the soft benignant influence of an autumn evening over every thing around her. How blind have I been! now that your Lordship suggests it, I see it all. (*Aside.*) I am obliged to help him out in his very abuse, for he knows too little of love's rhetoric, even to hate with eloquence.

L. Dart. Now there is a person, in whose radiant eyes, and sparkling decorums, the majesty of imperial cupid sits in state, and dispenses innocuous glories with the careless profusion of a city feast, or the dazzling splendor of a courtly gala.—There is a person——

Miss Her. Your Lordship means Miss Manly!—Yes, indeed, she is a fine young woman enough——

L. Dart. Miss Manly! Miss Manly, madam, is as a scintillating link to the gorgeous orb of day, compared to the ineffable divinity of my prostrate adoration.

Miss Her. Whom can your Lordship mean?

L. Dart. Mean! whom should I mean—whom must I mean, whom can I mean, but the celestial Phœnix of her sex, the divine Miss Herbert?

Miss Her. Me, my Lord!—Good heaven!—I am so confused all on a sudden—Did your Lordship say me?

L. Dart. Yes, yes, your adorable everlasting self.

Miss Her. If your Lordship really entertains—If

your Lordship has indeed done me the honour to have conceived a passion——

L. Dart. A passion!—a flame—a conflagration—a volcano!

Miss Her. Nay now, my Lord, I can no longer doubt the plain sincerity of your professions—but as it is a fixed rule with me, rather to follow than to lead, in events of this awful importance, I should wish to avoid any further communication with a person of your Lordship's dangerous eloquence, till the proper sanction of my relations has been previously obtained; my aunt would be too happy to receive any proposals of your Lordship's; till then permit me to take my leave.——Successful even beyond my hopes. [*Aside.*

[*Exit.*

L. Dart. Hah, hah. Now this I call being in luck—just as one had lost scent in one quarter, to have a nobler game started in another.—Now, gad take me, 'tis very odd, but what a blunderbuss I am at a speech—I mean in the love way—for on other subjects I can deliver myself with a becoming intelligibility enough; but we higher order of beings, that have sense enough, never to be more than merely artificial lovers, as we never understand the real orthodox gibberish of the passion, so when we once get to talk upon it, we never know when to stop—Now that scintillating link—gorgeous orb—conflagration, and volcano, were not at all to my liking, but what could I do? I must say something—but above all, what had I to do with an allusion to a city feast? What has a city feast to do among the delicacies of a lover's commons? Well, I must read for it—at least till I am married; and then, indeed, it will be full time to discard both the passion and the language of it in amicable indifference together. Well, I will lose no time in preparing my proposals.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

MR MANLY'S.

Enter MISS MANLY.

Miss Man. Could I have suspected Welford of infidelity! Happy, happy Miss Wingrove. So vanish all my hopes!

Enter YOUNG MANLY.

Young Man. Emma, what means this agitation? Whence these tears? Is my mother well? Where is my father? Speak, dear Emma.

Enter MRS MANLY.

Mrs Man. O Harry! what uneasiness has your absence occasioned?—why will you pay so little attention to your family?

Young Man. Dear madam, I deserve more reprehension than I ever meet with, yet let me entreat your present forbearance. My heart, since last I saw you, has been torn by such a variety of anguish, that I have not yet been master of my conduct—But why is Emma thus uneasy?

Mrs Man. Dear girl, I believe her uneasiness results from mine—could you have thought it, Harry? I scarce know how to tell you, but your father has seduced Miss Wingrove from her friends—where he has placed her I know not—but——

Young Man. Thank heaven, then, I have been truly informed, and she is with my father.

Mrs Man. Thank heaven, Henry! Do you thank heaven that your father wrongs me? Your

behaviour shocks me, Harry—It is even worse than his.

Young Man. Dear mother, don't indulge such suspicions—my father steal Miss Wingrove from her friends!—No, no, indeed he did not: that she is with him truly rejoices me?

Enter OLD MANLY.

Young Man. Dear sir, where is Miss Wingrove? Where is my lovely Julia. Will she permit me to behold her face again? Yet how dare I hope it?

Old Man. Ought I to permit you to behold my face again, sir; how dare you hope that? Instead of asking impertinent questions about what does not concern you, have the goodness to account for your own conduct, sir—you leave your family—fill them with apprehensions for your safety, and at your return, instead of meeting us with proper submission, you begin by hectoring your poor innocent father, and bullying him with a long string of saucy inquiries—Where is Miss Wingrove?—Where is my Julia? (*Mimicking him.*) What have you to do with Miss Wingrove? Who made her your Julia?

Mrs Man. Who, indeed? She is differently disposed of.

Young Man. Dear sir, how could I possibly imagine that what I said would give the slightest ground of offence? The Larrons assured me she went away with you.

Mrs Man. There, Mr Manly, there! I am jealous now without a cause! I have no foundation for my suspicions!

Miss Man. Dear madam, dear sir! hear me one moment, I can too certainly assure you where Miss Wingrove is.

Mrs Man. Where, Emma, where?
Young Man. Dear, dear Emma, tell me instantly.
Old Man. Aye, let us hear, child—let us hear it.
} *All at once.*

Miss Man. The report we heard, madam, was too well founded; Miss Wingrove is indeed with Mr Welford.

Young Man. With Welford!

Mrs Man. Ridiculous, child! mere jealous apprehension!

Young Man. Madam!

Mrs Man. Ask your father whose supicions are the wildest, hers or mine—he can set you right at once if he chooses it—but I'll stay no longer to endure such treatment.

Old Man. Don't, my dear, don't.

Mrs Man. Your indifference, Mr Manly, is even more injurious than your infidelity. [*Exit.*

Old Man. Before I go to appease your mother, who is as absurd as you are profligate, let me caution you, young man, how you practise such another frolic in a hurry—the wicked story that you have so ingeniously trumped up about my being at such a place as Larron's—this excellent joke, I say, sir, which owes all its genius to its being a falsehood, and its wit to the certain mischief it was sure to produce in your family, won't be passed over unpunished, I assure you—have you no duty?—no regard for truth?—But it was ever thus with you, you prodigal—The best example I have ever been able to set you, either for truth or modesty, never produced the slightest effect upon your vile, impenetrable nature, and the mildest language, you rascal, was always thrown away upon you. [*Retires.*

Young Man. Dear Emma, unravel, if you can, this knot of perplexities; my father answers me

with anger, my mother with tears, and you, my dear sister, start an idea, which is one of the last that would have entered my imagination; yet, being once presented, love will not suffer it to repose in idleness—Tell me, my Emma—Can Julia be with Welford? Can she—can he!—can both be so inconstant?

Miss Man. O Harry, why did I mention it—This may be the source of fresh affliction—Think, if it is so, that I endure enough, and do not increase my misery—You know my fears.

Young Man. Lay them aside, dear Emma! be assured I shall act with moderation—I know I shall—O Julia!—But you must tell me all you know respecting her, and the villain—I will not name him—that has stolen her from me. Come to my study, Emma; nay, dry your eyes—you shall see what an example of patience I will exhibit—I shall quarrel with no one but myself, for in myself alone is the foundation of all the miseries I am exposed to. [*Exeunt* YOUNG MANLY *and* EMMA.

Enter Servant to OLD MANLY.

Ser. Miss Herbert, sir, desires to know if she can have the pleasure of half a minute's conversation with you.

Old Man. Show her in. [*Exit Servant.*

Enter MISS HERBERT.

Old Man. This is indeed a kindness, my dear Miss Herbert; your visits are valuable in proportion to their rarity, like winter's suns—or—or—no—like—

Miss Her. Never mind, my dear Mr Manly, what they are like, we will settle the impromptu upon more mature deliberation another time.

Old Man. Egad, and so we will, for nothing requires so much time as an off-hand speech.

Miss Her. Now, sir, to the object of my visit—Report says that you have seen Miss Wingrove, and I am anxious to hear how the charming creature endures her misfortunes.

Old Man. Very true, madam; but where should I see Miss Wingrove?

Miss Her. Why, report does say, sir, that you met her at a place where it would have been equally for her happiness, and your reputation, that you had never met at all—at Mrs Larron's.

Old Man. It's a falsehood—a confounded falsehood—I go to Mrs Larron's! but, dear Miss Herbert, how can a young lady of your candour and good sense give credit to such a thing, particularly when you had such good reason for disbelieving it, as its being the general report.

Miss Her. Why, indeed, Mr Manly, as you say, what should you do at such places? You know you are subsiding into the calm evening of life, when the tempestuous passions gently sink into a soft undisturbed repose—I dare say now you feel this sweet cheerful twilight of your days to be attended with more substantial comfort, and much more real happiness, than the gaudier scenes of your meridian life, when every thing was brilliant, and nothing solid; every thing gay, but nothing rational.

Old Man. Twilight! Gadso!—None of your twilights neither, Miss—This is the way—There is no such thing as purchasing impunity in this world for one offence, but by pleading guilty to a worse—Well, Miss; and suppose I was at Mrs Larron's.

Miss Her. (*Aside.*) O ho! I thought I should bring him to a confession; he will acknowledge any

vice but age. So, sir, you were there, then, after all.

Old Man. Gad's life, ma'am, don't ask so many questions; I understand you well enough, Miss—You would insinuate that I am a helpless old fellow—that you can see no great use in my living, and that the sooner I am hanged out of the way the better; but give me leave to tell you, madam—

Enter Admiral CLEVELAND.

Adm. Cleve. Hey day! What storm's a-brewing now? Why, neighbour Manly, this is a rough gale upon so fair a coast—what, quarrelling with my niece?

Miss Her. Dear uncle, I'm quite rejoiced to see you, you never came so seasonably to the rescue of a poor little disabled frigate in your life—Mr Manly here——

Old Man. Your niece is an impertinent, forward, malicious young woman, Mr Cleveland, and I desire never to see her face again—I'll never, never forgive her—No, if I were to live till I was sixty.

Miss Her. What a formidable resentment! Why, the period of it has expired these five years.

Adm. Cleve. (*Aside.*) Leave him to me, I'll teaze the old fellow—I came on purpose.

Miss Her. I will.

Adm. Cleve. But how did the brush happen? What is the cause of it?

Miss Her. Why, sir, I spoke, I am afraid, somewhat too justly of your friend's age, and appeared to entertain too favourable an opinion of his morality—offences which a lively, determined rover, in his climacteric, can never reconcile to his forgiveness.

Adm. Cleve. O, is that all?

Miss Her. So, good Mr gallant, gay Lothario of sixty-five, a good morning to you.

[*Exit Miss* HERBERT.

Old Man. A saucy minx.

Adm. Cleve. Come, Manly, you have too many of the substantial afflictions of life to contend with at present to be ruffled by little breezes of this sort—But I am your friend, and I thought it my duty, as such, to call upon you, and to do what a friend ought to comfort you.

Old Man. Why, that was very kind, my old neighbour, very kind indeed—be seated, I beseech you—Yes, indeed, 'tis very true, as you say, Admiral, I am a wretched, miserable, unhappy man, oppressed with sorrows, laden with affliction—overtaken, before my time, by many cares. Yet 'tis something, my worthy neighbour, to have a trusty friend to take a kind interest in one's misfortunes—to share, as it were, the sad load of life—to ride and tie with one in the weary pilgrimage—O, 'tis a charming thing to have a friend!

Adm. Cleve. I think so indeed, and hope to prove as much—I have no other object but to comfort you—None, none. You are indeed very unhappy.

Old Man. Very, very!

Adm. Cleve. Why, there's your wife, now.

Old Man. Aye—my wife—O! O!

[*A long sigh.*

Adm. Cleve. Nay be comforted, my friend—be comforted—Why she is of herself a sufficient load of misery for any one poor pair of mortal shoulders. Always fretful, her suspicions never asleep—and her tongue always awake—constantly making her observations, like a vessel sent out upon discovery—ever on the watch, like an armed cutter, to cut off any little contraband toy, and to intercept any harmless piece of smuggled amusement.

Old Man. O! 'tis dreadful, neighbour, quite dreadful indeed.

Adm. Cleve. Take comfort, my friend—What did I come here for? Take comfort, I say—There is your son too.

Old Man. Yes, my son too, an abandoned profligate.

Adm. Cleve. Nay, if that were all, there might be hopes—the early little irregularities that grow out of the honest passions of our nature are sometimes an advantage to the ripened man; they carry their own remedy along with them, and when remedied, they generally leave the person wiser and better than they found him—wiser for his experience, and better for the indulgence which they give him towards the infirmities of others—but a canting, whining, preaching profligate—a sermon-maker at twenty—a fellow that becomes a saint before he's a man—a beardless hypocrite—a scoundrel that cannot be content with common homely sinning, but must give it a relish by joining a prayer with it in his mouth—of such a fellow there can be no hopes—no hopes indeed.

Old Man. None, none. O miserable that I am, where will my affliction end? Where shall I find consolation?

Adm. Cleve. Consolation!—In me to be sure!—What else was the purpose of my visit? I forbear to say any thing of your daughter, poor unhappy girl.

Old Man. Conceal nothing from me. What has happened to my poor child?—what has happened to her? She was my favourite. Miserable man! O miserable man!

Adm. Cleve. Nay, if it will give you any comfort, I will tell you. It is my duty to do so—why, she, you know, was desperately in love with Charles

Welford. He has turned her off, I find—discharged her the service, and has fallen in with somebody else; so that I suppose by to-morrow morning we may look for her birth, poor girl, in the ambush of a willow, or the retirement of a fish-pond.

Old Man. Now the sum of my calamities is complete. (*Weeps.*) Now, indeed, the cup is full—poor undone man!—miserable husband!—wretched father!

Adm. Cleve. Aye, and all to come upon you at your time of life too—Had your misfortunes reached you when you were in the vigour of your days—(OLD MANLY *dries his eyes, and looks resentfully*) when you retained enough of bodily strength and force of mind to cope with them—but—at your time of day, when the timbers are approaching fast towards decay, when the lights of the understanding are upon the glimmer, and the reckoning of life is pretty nearly out—O! 'tis too horrible. Faith, after all, I don't know how to comfort you.

Old Man. (*In a rage.*) (*Both rising.*) I believe not, indeed; you fusty, musty, old, foul-mouthed, weather-beaten coxcomb—timbers approaching fast to decay! Whose timbers do you mean, old jury-mast? look at your own crazy hulk—do—and don't keep quoting your damn'd log-book criticisms upon your juniors and your betters.

Adm. Cleve. Nay, my good friend.

Old Man. Damn your friendship and your goodness too. I don't like friendship that only wants me to hate myself—and goodness that only goes to prove every thing bad about me. So, good Mr Yellow Admiral, sheer off—do—and till you can stuff your old vessel with a cargo of more commoditable merchandise, don't let me see you in my latitude again.

Adm. Cleve. Sir, let me tell you, you may repent of this language; and were it not for pity of your age and your misfortunes——

Old Man. O curse your pity; and as for misfortunes, I know of none equal to your consolation.

Adm. Cleve. You shall hear more of this, Mr Manly.

Old Man. Not for the present, if you please—if you want my life, take it—take any thing—only take yourself off.

Adm. Cleve. Very well, sir. You shall hear from me at a proper time. (*Aside.*) I have made the old fool nobly miserable; that's some comfort, however.

Old Man. (*Solus.*) What an ass was I, to listen so long to the hollow croakings of this melancholy sea monster—a rusty old weather-cock; always pointing one way, and that to the quarter of misfortune—I miserable!—What should make me so?—Is not my wife kind and faithful, and only a little troublesome now and then for my good?—Is not my son generous and gay—and—and like his father, as a son should be?—and a'n't I stout in body, and sound in mind?—And is not every thing as I would have it?—A dismal old!—now has he given me a sample of the view with which advice is always bestowed, and I him a proof of the effects with which it is always taken—he came to me to increase my distresses by consolation, and I have made use of his counsel as a new argument for pleasing myself. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Miss Herbert's.

Enter Miss Herbert *and Mrs* Rachel.

Miss Her. Well, my dear aunt, have you been more successful in your inquiries after the unfortunate Miss Wingrove than I have been?

Mrs R. Cleve. I don't know how to say I have been more successful—but from your account, I have collected more particulars—I understand she was accidentally encountered by Mr Welford, who kindly offered her the asylum of his house, which she accepted—but learning, by conversation with his relations, that her reception there had produced a quarrel between him and his mistress, the generous girl scorned to consult her own comfort at the expense of her protector, and having contrived to change her own clothes for those of a younger brother of Mr Welford's, she accomplished her escape.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr Wingrove, madam.

Miss Her. Admit him. O, he shall receive no mercy at my hands whilst he continues the persecutor of his sister—Will you give me leave, madam, to receive him alone?

Mrs R. Cleve. Certainly, my dear. [*Exit.*

Enter Mr Wingrove

Mr Win. Will Miss Herbert permit a penitent to approach her?

Miss Her. O! by all means—a real penitent—but are you quite sure that you come under that description, or is yours like the common repentance of the world, which consists rather in a prejudice against punishment, than a sincere contrition for the offence?

Mr Win. Dear, charming Harriet, how can you question it?—I am ashamed of the violence of my behaviour at our last interview; yet you must acknowledge that you drew me into that suspicion by your ambiguous deportment. Surely my Harriet could not find entertainment in the uneasiness of the man who adores her.

Miss Her. (*Aside.*) Bless me, if he continues in this strain of humility, I shall never be able to punish him as he deserves—yet I must.

Mr Win. What's that, my Harriet? You cannot doubt the sincerity and devotion of my love.

Miss Her. A-propos—Was it you that fell in love with me, or your father?

Mr Win. My father! Harriet?

Miss Her. Aye, you or your father; which of you is it that I have had the good fortune to inspire with so favourable an opinion of me? I am inclined to think it is to the elder gentleman I owe the obligation.

Mr Win. Nay, now, madam, I don't understand you.

Miss Her. In plain English, then, had you your instructions from your father to undergo the labour of wooing, or did you come of your own accord?

Mr Win. Can my Harriet entertain so humiliating an opinion of me, as to suppose I would be actuated, in so dear a concern as that, by any influence but the impulse of my own affection?

Miss Her. Take care, Mr Wingrove—take care

—there is nothing so tempting, I admit you, as those pretty words that fall gracefully in to close the procession of an ambitious sentence; but let me ask you plainly, sir, Whether, if your father should now, even now, lay his commands upon you to relinquish the passion with which you affect to regard me, you would not instantly obey him, and leave me forsaken and forlorn, to transfer your obedient ardours to any new lady of his choice?

Mr Win. 'Tis true, I feel the most sincere respect for my father; yet had he thought proper to interpose his influence in a case where nature claims a paramount authority, I had renounced a submission which I should have held to have been unjustly exacted.

Miss Her. Are you sure of it?

Mr Win. Quite sure.

Miss Her. Dear Mr Wingrove. (*Taking his hand.*)

Mr Win. (*Kissing it.*) My lovely, my adorable Harriet!—Sure of it! am I sure of my existence? Am I sure of your being the most lovely of your own sex—or I the happiest of mine? (*Kisses her hand*). Am I sure that we shall never exchange another harsh word, or another unkind look? Am I sure——

Miss Her. Nay, now, sir, you are fairly caught.

Mr Win. Hey-day! What frolic is in the wind now?

Miss Her. If all this be true, Mr Wingrove, tell me, sir, what it is that constitutes the offence of your sister? Why is she driven out a disgraced wanderer to encounter all the unknown hazards of a merciless world, when one of her persecutors not only aknowledges that he shares in all her guilt—if guilt it be—but glories in the sympathy he feels in her disobedience, because he considers it as a

just tribute to the object of his affections, and a proof of his independence?

Mr Win. My sister, ma'am, is a woman—and—and—

Miss Her. My sister, ma'am, is a woman!—and—and—that is, my sister is an interdicted being—disinherited by Nature of her common bounties—a creature, with regard to whom, engagements lose their faith, and contracts their obligations. In your fictitious characters as lovers, you endeavour to make us believe that we are exalted above human weaknesses; but in your real characters, as men, you more honestly demonstrate to us, that you place us even below your own level, and deny us the equal truth and justice that belongs alike to all intelligent beings. This language, sir, is new, at least in the vocabulary of love; I wish I could say the sentiments it conveys were equally so in the hearts of your most imperious sex.

Mr Win. Before I was interrupted, madam, by this torrent of modest rhetoric on the merits of your most unimperious sex—for so, in particular, I am bound to think them, I meant merely to have said, that I can aggrandize the woman with whom it may be my fate to be united—whereas, if my sister joined herself with an inferior, she would have become necessarily degraded to the rank of her husband. But I find, madam, these insults are calculated merely to gratify your pride, by proving to what extremity of meanness your power can reduce me. I blush at the servilities to which it has already exposed me, and now throw off the yoke for ever. [*Going.*

Miss Her. Stay, sir; before you go, let me beg you to favour this letter with a perusal. Read it at your leisure; and now—a long farewell to all my greatness.

Mr Win. Damnation! laughed at too—Farewell, madam, and I swear——

Miss Her. Nay, sir, don't swear; or if thou wilt swear—swear by thy gracious self!

Mr Win. (*In a fury of passion.*) Madam, I go —for ever. [*Exit.*

Miss Her. To have convinced me of that, your congé, my rebellious captive, should have been taken with somewhat less disturbance. I am glad I had recollection enough to give him Lord Dartford's letter of proposals before he went. He was in a terrible rage, to be sure—so much the better —while a woman retains power enough over a man to make him lose his temper, he is not yet in that state of healthy indifference that entitles him to bid defiance to a relapse of affection. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The ADMIRAL's *Garden.*

Enter JULIA (*in boy's clothes, looking back.*)

Miss J. Win. Yonder is my brother, and his servant, as I live; perhaps in pursuit of me! I dare not meet them—Yet sure they could not know me—I hardly know myself—Their eyes seem directed this way—I'll shut the gate till they have passed. Ha! who comes here? perhaps the owner of this place. From my long residence with my aunt, I am almost a stranger in my native village—Bless me, he has a stern countenance! I had best conceal myself till he quits the garden. [*Retires.*

Enter ADMIRAL.

Adm. Cleve. Why, what a pack of idle fellows I keep about me! When I'm laid up with the gout, these rascals do nothing—See what a fine jessamine here is almost spoilt for want of tying up—let's try what I can do. (*Goes to tie it,* JULIA *shifts her place.*) What's that shakes the leaves so?—Hey, is not that a man? O! O! there's the way my nectarines fall so short. (*Goes and brings* JULIA *forward.*) Here! here! no resistance—Come out, and

let us see what we can make of you. Well, young graceless, and what do you do here? Come, let's hear what account you can give of yourself.

Miss J. Win. I do assure you, sir, I came in by accident.

Adm. Cleve. By accident! Well that's a good beginning enough; what, do you shut your eyes as you go along, that you can't tell the highway from an enclosure?

Miss J. Win. I mean, sir, I just stepped in to avoid a person I wished not to see me.

Adm. Cleve. Very like, sir; but pray, sir, will you have the goodness to tell us who you may happen to be, sir?

Miss J. Win. Pray, sir, excuse me.

Adm. Cleve. Indeed, sir, I shall do no such thing —Come, sir, who's your father?

Miss J. Win. I cannot tell you, indeed, sir.

Adm. Cleve. Indeed, sir—Well, after all, it might puzzle a wiser head than yours to do that; but possibly you may have better luck with regard to your mother—who is she?

Miss J. Win. My mother, sir, is dead.

Adm. Cleve. Dead, is she? But had she no name when she was alive? Egad you shuffle so, that I fancy you've been longer at the trade than I at first imagined. You're a gay spark for the profession too—If Rachel had been a young woman, I should have suspected something else; but perhaps the coat may have been stolen too; these gentry now-a-days think nothing they can get too good for them, and the finger is only an accomplice to the felonious pride of the back—"win gold and wear it." —Hey, is that your maxim, my young poacher? Gadso, now I remember, I have seen Sam Welford in those very clothes—I shall secure you, my lad; you shall answer all this.

Miss J. Win. I beseech you, sir, not to expose me.

Adm. Cleve. Not expose you—What! do you think I shall connive at felony? Here, Tom, Simon, Ralph—attempt to move, and you're a dead man. Here, will nobody help me to secure this villain?

Enter Mrs RACHEL *and Servants.*

Adm. Cleve. Here, seize that fellow, and tie his hands behind him—Keep off, Rachel, I dare say he has got pistols in his pockets—Lead him directly to a magistrate, I'll follow.

Miss J. Win. Dear madam, I implore you to plead for me to that gentleman—your looks speak benevolence—I entreat you, madam, to have pity on me.

Adm. Cleve. There's a young artful dog now, beginning to coax and flatter Rachel about her good looks; aye, that's the way with these handsomer sprigs of the fraternity, they are sure to attack the women; but 'tis such a snivelling puppy—why hang it, my lad, you must expect these rubs in the way of your business, it's only a misfortune in trade—Come, man, behave yourself a little more like a rascal of spirit.

Mrs R. Cleve. Brother, I entreat you to send your servants in.

Adm. Cleve. Send 'em in, Rachel! why—how's this? Do you want him to make his escape? Has he softened you with his whimpering? You know if he takes to his heels, I can't follow him.

Mrs R. Cleve. I have particular reasons for my request.

Adm. Cleve. Well, be it so then—wait in the house till I call you. (*Exeunt servants.*) Don't you think to get off though—if you attempt to stir——

Miss J. Win. You may rely upon it, sir, I will not move. O madam, may I hope that you will befriend me in this dreadful exigency?

Adm. Cleve. No, no, my lad, You are dipping into the wrong pocket there; Rachel is not, like most of her sex, to be won over by wheedling, you do but fling away your skill. But why was I to dismiss those fellows, Rachel?

Mrs R. Cleve. Brother, if what I've already said has surprised you, I shall increase your astonishment still farther, by desiring to have a short conversation with this stranger, while you walk aside.

Adm. Cleve. What, leave you alone with a pick-pocket, a house-breaker? I tell you, he has pistols in his pockets, or a swashing cutlass in his coat-lining! Rachel, Rachel, you are a poor ignorant woman, you can't tell what instruments these fellows may have about them.

Mrs R. Cleve. You are mistaken, brother, this is no robber, I am persuaded.

Adm. Cleve. O Rachel, Rachel, is it come to this after all!—I did think, for your sake, that there might be such a thing as a woman without folly or frailty; but you are determined that I shall not die with too favourable an opinion of your sex—for shame, Rachel, for shame—'tis too bad—too bad indeed.

Mrs R. Cleve. A few minutes will convince you, brother, that if I merited your good opinion before, I shall not be likely to forfeit it on the present occasion.

Adm. Cleve. May be so, may be so, Rachel, it has an odd look however; have a care of yourself, old girl; if you should do a foolish thing, it won't be taken as if one of your prudes had been guilty of a little trespass, who prepare people for their fall by the fuss they make about their virtue.

You'll have a hot birth on't, my old lass, you will —but, however, mind I give you fair warning.

[*Retires.*

Miss J. Win. Dear madam, vouchsafe to hear my wretched story.

Mrs R. Cleve. As I know not what impression my brother's strange conjectures may have made on your opinion, suffer me to gain a little credit, by sparing you the trouble of informing me that you are Miss Wingrove.

Miss J. Win. Madam!

Mrs R. Cleve. Dear young lady, be not alarmed at this discovery, for never was there more sincere commiseration than what your sufferings have produced in me.

Miss J. Win. O madam, how has my wretched situation been made known to you? and by what means may I obtain your friendship?

Mrs R. Cleve. I have but one condition to propose, and that is an unreserved communication of the circumstances that have involved you in this distress—that made, for I cannot admit an idea of criminality in you, I can assure you not only of my own protection, but my brother's; who is as warm in his atachments, as he is rash and hasty in forming conclusions from first appearances; but my brother returns; I would not meet him till I can inform him of the whole. This way, dear Miss Wingrove. [*Retire to an alcove.*

Enter ADMIRAL.

Adm. Cleve. What, isn't this tete-a-tete over yet! what, they retire at the sight of me—O! guilt! guilt! I'll observe you though—why, she seems to be courting him! I'll be sunk if it isn't so—Aye, Rachel, now you have flung aside propriety, decency, I fancy, will soon follow. Women, I find,

never love to do silly things by halves; when once they slip cable on a voyage of folly, let them bring them to that can—particularly your reasoning sort of sensible, elderly gentlewomen—for when they have fairly passed the equinox of life, they know they sail with a trade-wind, and the devil can't stop them, till they are snug in harbour with a yoke fellow, after a tedious passage of difficult virginity. By all that's scandalous she takes his hand—O, sit down, sit down, my gentle swain—Why he's weeping still—sink me if ever I saw such a watery-ey'd puppy. Not but there was something in his distress that moved me—if circumstances had not been so strong against him, I should no more have taken him for a thief than for a sailor—What, must he have your smelling bottle too?—why she has left him in the arbour, and comes this way—she looks as if she saw me too—can she face me? will she brazen out her folly? (RACHEL *advances.*) Well, Mrs Rachel Cleveland.

Mrs R. Cleve. Well, brother, I come to clear up all your doubts and difficulties.

Adm. Cleve. O, don't take so much trouble, madam, it is sufficiently clear already, I give you my word.

Mrs R. Cleve. Nay, then I perceive you are under your old mistake, so I shall explain all at once. This way, my dear. (*To* JULIA.)

Adm. Cleve. My dear! by heaven, that's too much—what, no shame, Rachel!

Mrs R. Cleve. Now learn your error, brother, and give me leave to recommend to your protection (JULIA *advances,* RACHEL *takes her hand, the* ADMIRAL *going out in a rage*) Miss Julia Wingrove.

Adm. Cleve. What's that, Rachel! who did you say?

Mrs R. Cleve. This young lady, brother, whose misfortunes you have heard in part, is Miss Julia Wingrove; I am convinced she deserves your friendship, and it is evident she is much in need of it.

Adm. Cleve. And she shall have it, cost what it will. Young lady! why, what a fool have I made of myself!—Can you excuse an old fellow, madam, who frequently lets his hasty temper run away with his slow wits?

Miss J. Win. Your present kindness, sir, infinitely overpays the fears occasioned by your misconception.

Adm. Cleve. You must seal my pardon, miss, by a salute, or I sha'nt think we are fairly reconciled. Rachel, I don't apologise to you, as I know your forgiveness is always close in tow of my repentance; but as for you, lady fair, since you have been forced upon my coast, they must fight through fire and water for you that drive you out to sea again.

Miss J. Win. Do not, I beseech you, sir, let your generous compassion for me lead you into danger; the bare idea of such a consequence would compel me to forego the comfort of your hospitable protection.

Adm. Cleve. O, don't let your little fearful heart begin conjuring up vexations, it'll do me a great deal of good—make my blood circulate—I have been too long out of action—a vast while too long—I am mere still water—spoiling for want of motion—a little hurricane or two will shake me clear again—I want a bit of a storm for the quiet of my old days, and a little wholesome danger will promote the safety of my health; so away with your fears, my little light fing—'Sblood I was getting on the old tack again.

Miss J. Win. But, dear sir——

Adm. Cleve. Do, Rachel, tell her what an obstinate old fellow I am, and that it is only wasting her ammunition to oppose me.

Mrs R. Cleve. There is so much generosity, brother, in the substance of what you say, that I have no inclination to dispute about the expression of it. Miss Wingrove, if you please, you shall lay aside this dress.

Miss J. Win. Gladly, madam.

Adm. Cleve. Come, young lady, let me be your conductor, and they that can make prize of British beauty when under the convoy of a British admiral, must have more weight of metal about them than the whole bulk of your lubberly relations, saving your presence, in a body—so cheerly, my little angel—bear up—"Blest isle with beauty, &c." (Singing.) [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Changes to LORD DARTFORD'S *House.*

LORD DARTFORD *and* JENKINS.

L. Dart. So this triumph of my attractions, as I had so naturally believed, was a sham after all—Death! how dared this saucy baggage venture to set her pert wits on so hazardous a deception?—but my turn may come; and if she should marry this bouncer Wingrove, and grow disgusted with him, which of course must be the case, it will be in vain that she turns her eyes to me, I assure her—But what's to be done in this affair?

Jen. Can't your Lordship disown having sent any proposal to Miss Herbert?

L. Dart. How can I do that; you delivered the letter, did'nt you?

Jen. Yes, my Lord, but he must be a very indifferent servant whose memory cannot fail him a little, for the advantage of his master.

L. Dart. Well, we must consign that difficulty to the ecclaircisement of time and better fortune—but, in the interim, this refusal of Miss Herbert's makes it of importance to recover this wandering nymph as soon as possible. Did Thomas, do you say, trace a young gentleman, resembling Miss Wingrove, to Admiral Cleveland's.

Jen. He did, my Lord, and was almost certain it was herself.

L. Dart. If it should prove so, and she obtains shelter there, I think it might be easy to watch for her in the garden, and steal her thence, but first the Admiral must be watched out though—remember that—there may be danger else.

Jen. That's one of the cases, my Lord, in which my memory never fails me.

L. Dart. Well then, let's about it instantly—if I could meet with the lady, there is no harsh treatment to her that the old Baronet will not interpret into respect for him; and as for the swaggerer, his son, let him know of my attempt upon his mistress, when I am married to his sister, with all my heart—Decency will prevent him from killing me then; and as for his opinion, as that is innocent of any effect upon the body, we must endeavour to endure it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

MISS HERBERT'S.

Miss Her. I don't know how it is, but I feel a sort of uneasiness about me, as if something had happened to vex me. What can it be? forgetful creature that I am!—Miss Wingrove's distresses, to be sure. Yet that is not a novelty at the present moment; and then the persevering absurdity of her lofty brother—ha! ha!—Sits the wind in that quarter? Well, I can't help it. I am afraid he is not quite indifferent to me; yet I must tame him out of this unreasonable haughtiness before marriage, that he may be entitled to the just pride of a husband when he becomes one.

Enter WINGROVE.

Bless me, how came you here?—Always stealing upon one?

Mr Win. I am so truly ashamed, madam—I cannot—

Miss Her. Come, sir, there is an eloquent humility in your manner that speaks for you. I have once before to-day construed your meaning; and I begin to flatter myself I shall not be a less faithful interpreter now, when I suppose that you are indeed a penitent for the treatment to which you have exposed your sister.

Mr Win. Indeed, indeed, I am so.

Miss Her. I am rejoiced to hear it. You have read the letter I gave you?

Mr Win. I have, madam.

Miss Her. Well, in all this wide world of caprice and uncertainty, there is but one thing infallible.

Mr Win. What is that?

Miss Her. That!—Why, that a man of rank never violates his plighted honour, and that birth involves in it every human virtue.

Mr Win. Perfidious scoundrel!—I'll tear him piece-meal.

Miss Her. Tear your own prejudices from your heart, Mr Wingrove.

Mr Win. They are gone, madam; and I have no other proof that they ever had an existence in my bosom, but the mortified sensibility which they have left behind them.

Miss Her. Come, sir, keep up your spirits; you will do charmingly, I am convinced.

Mr Win. Nay; I am not now a convert to your opinion, my Harriet.

Miss Her. What!—a relapse?

Mr Win. No, I only mean to say, this is not the first time of my life in which I have thought as you do. Reason has had many ineffectual struggles with prejudice in my mind upon this subject before. But henceforth I disclaim all reverence for such idle superstitions—I despise birth, and all the vanities which attend it.

Miss Her. Now, Mr Wingrove, I do not think so well of your case as I did. I am myself no peevish, morose caviller at birth. It is always graceful, and often useful, when it operates as a motive to a kind and honourable emulation with the illustrious dead; but when those who possess the advantage, endeavour to make it a substitute for every other excellence, then indeed I think the offender is entitled to no gentler sentiment than my contempt, or my pity.

Mr Win. My Harriet shall, from this time, regu-

late my opinions in every thing—and now may I hope—

Miss Her. Not now! not now—Go home, and be upon the watch to avail yourself of the first opportunity to reconcile every thing. Let this be the first probation of your recovery; and if, when next we meet, I should find matters in a way that promises general happiness, perhaps I may not be so cruel to myself as to deny you the civility of partaking in it.

Mr Win. Charming Harriet. [*Exeunt separately.*

SCENE IV.

The ADMIRAL'S *Garden.*

Enter MRS RACHEL, WELFORD, *and* YOUNG MANLY.

Mrs R. Cleve. Excuse me, Mr Manly, Miss Wingrove's feelings have been lately too much agitated for me to suffer her to be exposed to new conflicts.

Young Man. Madam, I came here to satisfy my anxious doubts about Miss Wingrove's safety; being once assured of that, I resign myself to the despair I have so justly merited. [*Walks off.*

Wel. Nay, but, madam, don't let your generous compassion for the fair sufferer entirely prevail over the penitent misery of the offender—let them but meet, and leave the rest to chance.

Mrs R. Cleve. Well, sir, if I can prevail, Mr Manly shall see Miss Wingrove—but let him under-

stand I will not have her urged upon any point, and the length of the interview must be entirely left to her own pleasure and discretion.

Wel. It shall, madam—I engage for his obedience in every thing. (*Exit* RACHEL.) Come, Manly, throw away your despair. Mrs Cleveland is gone to bring in your Julia.

Young Man. Call her back, I beseech you. I dare not meet my injured love—Call her back, I intreat you; though I feel this kindness from you, Welford, with double force, after my late behaviour to you—how could I suspect you?

Wel. No more of that—here she comes without my trouble, and with her—shall I send them back?

Enter MRS RACHEL *and* JULIA.

[*As soon as they see each other,* MANLY *kneels, and* JULIA *reclines on* MRS RACHEL.]

Young Man. O Julia!

Miss J. Win. Mr Manly!

Young Man. O my loved Julia! I dare not approach you; yet let me survey that form, where every virtue claims its own impression. Let me see anger aggravated by sweetness, and justice, in her most awful form, invested in all the terrors of offended beauty. Look on me but whilst I describe the agonies I have endured for your sufferings, and the pangs I have undergone for my inexpiable guilt. I do not expect to be forgiven—only say you will endeavour not to hate me; and I go, my Julia—if you will have it so, for ever.

Miss J. Win. Mr Manly, I cannot very easily hate—nay, sir, I even forgive you—but if your hopes, which I can hardly suppose, should exceed this prudent limit, they deceive you.

Wel. Come, Miss Wingrove, let me hope you

will consider this matter. I will not press it now—but—

Miss J. Win. My obligations to you, sir, have been important indeed; but this is not a topic even for the claims of gratitude. Mr Manly, I am sure, will not oppose the only plan of comfort that is left me—a quiet, peaceful seclusion.

Young Man. No, my Julia, no—never will I disturb your repose.

Miss J. Win. I beg your pardon, Mrs Cleveland; but indeed I am not well.

Mrs R. Cleve. Be seated, my dear. I entreat you to take your leave for the present, gentlemen.

Young Man. Rascal that I am!

[*Exeunt* MANLY *and* WELFORD.

Mrs R. Cleve. Keep up your spirits. I'll step into the house, and fetch something for your relief, my dear. [*Exit.*

Miss J. Win. I am sorry, madam——

Enter LORD DARTFORD *and* JENKINS, *with Servants behind.*

L. Dart. There she is—and alone, by all that's lucky. Lose no time. You are sure the admiral is not at home?

Jen. Quite sure, my Lord.

L. Dart. Very well; lose no time; advance.

[*They seize* JULIA.

Miss J. Win. What means this rudeness?—Help! help! O help me, or I am lost!

Re-enter MANLY, WELFORD, *and* RACHEL.

Young Man. My Julia's voice!

[JENKINS *runs away.*

L. Dart. Take care, Mr Manly—We are well armed—take care, I say.

Young Man. Dastardly villain—a pistol.

[*Strikes it out of his hand.*

[*The Dartford party escape.*

How is my Julia?—Thank heaven, that has afforded me an opportunity of being serviceable to her in any thing.

Wel. How fare you, madam?

Miss J. Win. Much beholden, gentlemen, to you both; but weary of this life of alarms and rescues.

Enter ADMIRAL'S *Servant.*

Ser. Your father, Sir William, madam, is within, inquiring for you.

Miss J. Win. I will intrude upon you so much further as to lead me to my father instantly.

Young Man. To your father!—Must it be so, Julia?

Miss J. Win. Do not oppose my request, Mr Manly; I am resolved to throw myself upon his mercy.—My misfortunes may have softened him. Will you be kind enough, madam, to accompany me? I shall need your friendly offices.

Mrs R. Cleve. Miss Wingrove may command me in any thing.

Young Man. Come then, my Julia, and let me deliver you up to that father from whose capricious cruelty I so lately thought to have given you a happy and a lasting freedom. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

The ADMIRAL'S *House.*

Enter SIR WILLIAM, MISS JULIA, MRS RACHEL, YOUNG MANLY, *and* MR WELFORD.

Sir W. Win. I am overjoyed at your safety, Julia; but yet your leaving me—

Mrs R. Cleve. Nay, Sir William, if the step your daughter took was imprudent, who forced her to it? Who was it that compelled her to seek an uncertain refuge among strangers?

Sir W. Win. 'Sdeath, madam, what had my conduct to do with her disobedience? 'Tis true, Lord Dartford's proposals to Miss Herbert render him unworthy my alliance; but is not this man a plebeian—a fellow of yesterday?

Wel. Here, sir, you must allow me the liberty of observing, that Mr Manly's recent services to your daughter, which you have just heard, merit a more liberal return.

Sir W. Win. That's very true, indeed—very true—I am sorry, indeed. I beg you ten thousand pardons, upon my word, sir.

Enter MR WINGROVE.

Mr Win. Where, where is she? [*Runs to* JULIA.

Sir W. Win. Gad, I must retrieve my dignity in time, or William will be in a tremendous fury—I say, sir, for any thing I know, you may be a very good sort of person, but you will excuse me if I

decline disgracing my family by a connection with one of your condition.

Mr Win. What's that?

Sir W. Win. I say, young gentleman, you have done my family a service—I acknowledge it—I am grateful for it—but

Mr Win. Nay, sir, now let me interpose. I have long been sensible of Mr Manly's merits, and have placed myself in the way of the accomplishment of his wishes, from causes which at this moment I feel no delight in contemplating.

Sir. W. Win. Why, what's all this? Why, William, is it you?—Are you sure it is you?

Mr Win. If identity depends upon the mind, sir, I glory in saying it is not—but, permit me to tell you, sir, we have been too long unjust to the merit of Mr Manly, and to the preference of the unhappy Julia—besides, sir, after what has happened, it will be necessary, even to the pride of your house, that an immediate union should take place between Julia and Mr Manly.

Sir W. Win. Well, if the necessity of the case forbids the possibility of a choice, I desire it to be understood—I give my free consent.

Young Man. Do you hear this, my Julia? Pardon me, but can I be blamed if I am astonished into audacious hope.

Miss J. Win. Do not, Mr Manly, renew a solicitation that may tend to plunge me into the guilt of disobedience a second time.

Enter OLD MANLY, MISS MANLY, *and* MISS HERBERT.

Old Man. Mrs Cleveland, you will excuse an impatient set of people who have too much affection for that inconsiderate fellow there; but hearing something of a skirmish here, in which he had

borne a part, we could not resist a kind of curiosity to know the particulars. I would have come by myself; but though my wife was too much frightened to be able to stir abroad, my daughter was too much alarmed to be able to stay at home, and so here we are together.

Mr Win. You are heartily welcome, sir, and I hope we shall all be better friends before we part.

Wel. (*To Miss Manly.*) Dare I hope now that my Emma has dismissed her doubts?

Miss Man. Name them not, dear Mr Welford, I beseech you.

Enter ADMIRAL CLEVELAND.

Adm. Cleve. Why, Hollo Rachel! What's all this? There was I gone to attend the examination of that smuggling dog Larron, and the woman he lives with, for receiving stolen goods, when in comes a hue and cry after me, with a Canterbury tale of your being run away with—I confess I did not give much credit to that part of the story, because, thinks I, an old maid, whatever may be the value of her lading, is a sort of neutral vessel, that all nations, to do them justice, hold very sacred from attack. I am glad to see you all at my house. Well, Sir William, may an old seaman, who boasts no larger store of arms than the short allowance which Nature gave him, presume to strike hands with a man whose ancestry bore command while Noah was a midshipman, eh?

Sir W. Win. I don't very well understand the intention of your speech, Admiral, but your kindness to my daughter spoke a language that could not be misinterpreted. I hope you'll excuse our breaking in upon you in this manner.

Enter O'DONNEL.

Who sent for you, sir.

O'Don. An plase your honour, they have secured the smart little gentleman below, that made such a dirdum about Miss—and we want to know what your honour intends to do wid him. Wheder your honour would give him de liberty to beset in de stocks, or would like better that he should take a pritty little walk in de horse pond, your honour?

Sir W. Win. Who is it the fellow means?

Young Man. Lord Dartford, I suppose.

Mr Win. O, let him go—[*Exit O'Donnel.*] you cannot punish him—he is above your ridicule—for he is below your contempt.

Old Man. But, I say, Admiral——

Adm. Cleve. Well, my friend.

Old Man. I was only going to say, that as this Lord cannot but feel himself at this juncture in a sort of an awkward kind of a taking, it would be good natured in you, and I am sure very agreeable to the company, to go to him and give him a little of your comfort—he's only vexed now at his disappointment—but go to him, worthy Admiral—do—and console him into perfect misery.

Adm. Cleve. Nay, my worthy friend, no more of that, I beseech you, it was only a small splice of forecastle merriment—the last faculty an old seaman parts with is a little sort of a sneaking fondness for a joke—and as it is often the only comfort that sticks to him after a life of service, it would be hard to deprive him of that.

Old Man. So, when you are no longer fit for duty, you kindly turn the hulk into a tender, and make it a crazy receptacle for forced jokes, and pressed witticisms. Well, I forgive you.

Adm. Cleve. (*To Old Man.*) Thank you, thank you—and now, Manly, I give you joy.

Old Man. Eh!—what—joy!—I entreat you my good friend—joy from you—

Adm. Cleve. Nay, I am serious now—I heartily congratulate you on the approaching happiness, I hope, of this wicked, honest fellow of a son of yours—the conduct of this Lord has brought him into the wind of my favour again—well, they may say what they will about the degeneracy of the times, and the falling off of our morals, and all that; but to my thinking, we improve in every thing except in fighting, and in that—though we may equal—damn me, if we can better, the good old model of our forefathers. I remember, in my younger years, there were some few scattered remnants of such chaps as his Lordship—some remains of your old school of beaux, who had been the insects of the former century, and which I had hoped were all extinct by this time; who, like him, were shewy and dangerous, fitter for manœuvring than action, and more gaudy in their tackle, than sound in their bottom—whereas, for ought I see, the striplings of these days, like this pickle Manly, have all the gaiety of their predecessors, with not a quarter of their foppery; and with less vice in their hearts, have more nature in their follies.

[*Miss* WINGROVE *advances.*

Miss J. Win. I can deny nothing, madam, to the kind eloquence of such an advocate, the more so, when, all-powerful as it is, it receives some small assistance, I fear, from the persuasions of my own heart—and now, Manly, may a poor, persecuted fugitive hope at last for a happy asylum from the severities of her fortunes? Shall I trust myself again to the precarious direction of so fickle a guide—yes, I will trust, most confidently trust thee, for

where there is generosity as the foundation virtue in a man's nature, the memory of a woman's sorrows will secure her against a repetition of the cause of them; nor with such a mind can her affection, fondly bestowed, ever be quite hopeless of a return.

Young Man. Dearest Julia, I will not injure either my gratitude or my love, by any attempt to convey them through the feeble vehicle of words—let my life speak the sincerity of my repentance, and the homage of my devoted affection: and as for that vice in particular which has protracted my happiness, and, but for the generous kindness of your brother, might have intercepted it for ever, I renounce it to the end of my life—I abjure it—no, never shall I offend by intemperance again—unless——

Miss J. Win. Unless, Manly!

Mr Win. Unless, Mr Manly!

Young Man. Unless one favouring smile from this company should hurry us all into an unexpected excess—an intemperance of HONEST GRATITUDE.

HE WOULD BE A SOLDIER;

A

COMEDY

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY

FREDERIC PHILON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Colonel Talbot,	*Mr Aicken.*
Sir Oliver Oldstock,	*Mr Quick.*
Captain Crevelt,	*Mr Lewis.*
Mandeville,	*Mr Farren.*
Count Jerpont,	*Mr Wewitzer.*
Wilkins,	*Mr Fearon.*
Caleb,	*Mr Edwin.*
Amber,	*Mr Thomson.*
Johnson,	*Mr Brown.*
Servant to Colonel,	*Mr Helme.*
Charlotte,	*Mrs Pope.*
Lady Oldstock,	*Mrs Webb.*
Harriet,	*Mrs Wells.*
Mrs Wilkins,	*Mrs Brown.*
Betty,	*Miss Stuart.*
Nancy,	*Miss Rowson.*

HE WOULD BE A SOLDIER.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Street.

Enter MRS WILKINS, *followed by* JOHNSON.

Mrs Wil. There's no such thing as stirring out of doors for the fellows now-a-days. I beg, sir, you would not follow me any farther.

Johns. I cannot leave you, my sweet, divine, charming girl!

Mrs. Wil. To how many, now, have you repeated the same lesson before you met me this morning?

Johns. To how many! Were a dozen such fine women as yourself to appear every day in public, there would be no such thing as walking the street for you;—a man should have a piece of flint in his breast.

Mrs Wil. He's a good handsome fellow, and don't talk badly. Then you will persist in following me?

Johns. How can I help it? I follow a fine woman by instinct—Do, my dear, kind, cruel angel, tell me where you live. [*Takes hold of her hand.*

Mrs Wil. But to what purpose? I can never see you.

Johns. Why not, my love?

Mrs Wil. Lord, I am an old married woman? (*Faintly struggling to disengage her hand.*) You wicked devil, leave me. The neighbours will take notice, and I shall get a bad name by you. Do go—I'm just at home.

Johns. But which is the house you live at?

Mrs Wil. I can't tell you—besides, I think I see my husband talking to the orange woman at the door, in the straw hat and scarlet cloak, with a little curly-pole boy in her hand, eating gingerbread.

Johns. Why, that's the George Inn. 'Sdeath! do you live there?

Mrs Wil. O you devil! I shall be ruined if ever you come after me.

Johns. Zounds! it's the very house I was going to—Isn't it kept by one Jacob Wilkins?

Mrs Wil. Yes, it is.

Johns. We're quite at home now—I suppose you're old Jacob's daughter.

Mrs Wil. I happen to be old Jacob's wife, though.

Johns. Pray, my dear, how long have you been married?

Mrs Wil. A long time, sir.

Johns. Not a long time, I am sure, from your looks.

Mrs Wil. Looks are very deceitful, especially those of married folks. I was married Candlemas-day, five—long—months.

Johns. Poor creature! you have had a tedious time of it.

Mrs Wil. But what's your business with Jacob Wilkins? Can't I do it?

Johns. Then you do Jacob's business sometimes?

Mrs Wil. To be sure I do, when he's out of the way. Poor man! it's a great relief to him.

Johns. But this is a matter on which I must see himself. Colonel Talbot, a gentleman of whom I think you must have heard, if you be Wilkins' wife, has wrote to him, and desired I would see him in consequence of that letter: were you at home when he received it?

Mrs Wil. No, I was not, sir: but I have often heard of Colonel Talbot; he's an Oxfordshire gentleman; his family, I hear, was the making of Wilkins. Lord! he has been a long time in the Indies, and, I'm told, has made a power of money. But is he come here, sir?

Johns. He is; and since his return has been down in Oxfordshire, in search of Wilkins, where he thought he still lived, and would have come here himself now, only he's very much indisposed.

Mrs Wil. Bless your heart! Jacob Wilkins has been in town, and kept the George Inn these ten years.

Johns. He has made a very ungrateful return to his benefactor Colonel Talbot. My master thought him dead, not having heard from him so many years; a conduct that was unpardonable, considering his obligations to the Colonel, and the great trust reposed in him.

Mrs Wil. Great trust! Lord, sir! what was it?

Johns. Why, Colonel Talbot left a son in his care—but come along, and I'll tell you the whole story by the way.

Mrs Wil. We must not be seen together for the

world; my husband is as jealous as the vengeance. Take a turn down this next street, and let me go home alone: follow me in about ten minutes; but take care you don't speak to me as if you had seen me before.

Johns. My dear Mrs Wilkins, what do you take me for? Do you suppose I never paid a visit to a married woman in my life? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Bar of the George Inn.

Enter CALEB, *followed by* WILKINS, *who appears greatly agitated.*

Ca. What do you knock me about for at this rate? Don't I slave like a horse from morning till night? I wish I had gone for a soldier as my brother did?

Wil. Your brother, you dog! I wish I never had seen either of your faces. What shall I do, I have no son to restore him! [*Bell rings violently.*

Ca. Coming! coming!—There's a bill wanted in the General Elliot.

Wil. Let them wait.

Ca. But suppose they won't wait, who'll pay off the score?

Wil. Out of my sight, sirrah, or I'll pay off your score—don't you see my temper is ruffled?

Ca Yes, and I feel it too. (*Bell rings.*) Coming! coming up, sir!

Enter MRS WILKINS.

Mrs Wil. My dear Mr Wilkins, what's the matter? The whole house seems turned topsy-turvy.

Wil. I am ruined.

Mrs Wil. Ruined! O, heaven forbid!

Wil. I say, woman, I'm undone; and the sooner I'm out of England the better.

Mrs Wil. Lord, Lord! you terrify me out of my wits, Jacob!

Wil. Suppose the best friend you had in the world had entrusted an only child to your care, and that through neglect you had lost him, what would you have to say for yourself?

Mrs Wil. And is that case yours, my dear?

Wil. It is.

Mrs Wil. But tell me how it happened.

Wil. You have frequently heard me make mention of Colonel Talbot, in whose family I was brought up?

Mrs Wil. To be sure I have.

Wil. It is a son of his I have lost.

Mrs Wil. You astonish me! But how came so great a man's son to be left in your care?

Wil. Why, you must know that Colonel Talbot, previous to his going abroad, was privately married to a beautiful girl, who waited on his mother: he had a son by this girl; and as the child came into the world, just as he was obliged to embark with the army for Portugal, the war before last, he left him in my care, desiring me to let him pass for my own till his return; and in case he was killed, to continue the deception till the death of his father.

Mrs Wil. And has the Colonel never been in England since?

Wil. Never till within these few days; therefore

his son continued with me till he was twelve years old, when I lost him.

Mrs Wil. In what manner did you lose him?

Wil. I cannot be certain; but as he was a boy of great spirit, and ever prattling of being a soldier, I suspect he was inveigled off by a recruiting party, which at that time was beating up for men in the village.

Mrs Wil. Didn't you acquaint his mother immediately with what happened?

Wil. She was dead.

Mrs Wil. You wrote to the Colonel to be sure.

Wil. There I was to blame. I couldn't summon up resolution sufficient. I thought he would have attributed the child's leaving me to neglect, or cruel treatment.

Mrs Wil. The best advice I can give you is, to tell Colonel Talbot his son is dead.

Wil. But how shall I produce a certificate of that? Should he examine the parish register, and no record of such a child's death be found, I should be taken up, and tried on a suspicion of murder.

Mrs Wil. Then tell him the truth at once.

Wil. Worse and worse!—He'll supppose this a mere invention of my own to screen my villany; else, why was I silent so long? and that I had been bribed by his relations to remove an obstacle to their inheriting both his acquired and paternal fortune.

Enter CALEB.

Ca. There's a gentleman from Colonel Talbot desires to see you.

Wil. What's to be done?—I dare not face him!

Ca. What shall I say to him, father?

Wil. Was there ever any thing so provoking as this fellow?

Mrs Wil. I have it. Show him into the parlour, my good boy; and tell him, Mr Wilkins will be with him presently, my good boy!

Ca. My good boy!—Ecod, she good-boys me to some tune this morning; I hope there's no mischief in the wind; for I'm sure those are the first good words I have had from her since she was my step-mother. [*Exit* CALEB.

Mrs Wil. How old is your son Caleb?

Wil. There's only a week difference between his age and young Talbot's.

Mrs Wil. Pass him on the Colonel for his son.

Wil. How?

Mrs Wil. Put a good face on the matter, and you'll not only slip your neck out of a halter, but make your fortune. I can turn Caleb round my finger. Go and speak to this gentleman, and let him know you'll introduce young Mr Talbot to him immediately. Do as I bid you, and leave the management of the rest of the business to me.

Wil. But what reason shall I give for not writing to him so long?

Mrs Wil. You must say you never received one of his letters; and your quitting the country will make it probable enough they might have miscarried.

Wil. Then to give his son no better education!

Mrs Wil. You must say he would not take any better; and you may find instances enow of as dull heirs to large estates, to give colour to your story.

Wil. And make a drawer of him too!

Mrs Wil. Well, he'll not be the first great man that has cried, Coming up, sir!—What do you stand confounded for? Away, away, man; and let me break the matter to Caleb.

Wil. It goes against my conscience—but self-preservation will have it so. [*Exit* WILKINS.

Mrs Wil. (*Alone.*) Now have I my gentleman under my thumb—whenever his tongue wags with the sound of jealousy, I'll threaten to discover upon him—and I'll see my dear, sweet fellow, who followed me home to-day as often as I please.—But to prepare this great booby—O! here he comes.

Enter CALEB.

Ca. Here, mother, I have brought you the bill.

Mrs Wil. Well, never mind the bill—I have something very particular to say to you. Do you know, Caleb, that your father is a man of the first character in this town?

Ca. To be sure he is, for selling the best old port and sherry in the kingdom.

Mrs Wil. But come, sit down, and listen to me. [*They sit.*

Ca. What signifies hearing so much about father's character—who gets him that character? Why, Caleb, is there one in the house fit to talk to a gentleman but myself?

Mrs Wil. My dear Caleb, let me entreat you to hear me.

Ca. Dear Caleb!——Yes, I'd listen to you all day for such words as these; good words are sugar plums to me: besides, mother, you can't think how pretty folks look when they are pleased.

Mrs Wil. Do you know, Caleb, whose son you are?

Ca. Whose son I am! My father's to be sure.

Mrs Wil. Certainly; but that father is not Jacob Wilkins.

Ca. No!

Mrs Wil. Colonel Talbot, the great nabob just arrived from the Indies, is your father.

Ca. My godfather, I suppose you mean.

Mrs Wil. I tell you he's your own father. You

were given when an infant to my husband, and he was ordered to bring you up as his son; it being necessary, for family reasons, which you'll know another time, to conceal your birth.

Ca. I always thought I was a better man's son than I appeared to be—But, mother, is'nt this all a joke?

Mrs Wil. Can my husband convince you that I am in earnest?

Ca. He has often convinced me that he himself was in earnest, as my shoulders can witness.

Mrs Wil. But, dear sir, I beg ten thousand pardons for keeping my seat so long. (*Geting up and curtsying very low.* CALEB *keeps his seat, with a vacant stare, and chuckling laugh of joy.*)

Ca. I thought I'd come to something at last.

Mrs Wil. Your father's gentleman, sir, is now waiting to see you.

Ca. My father's gentleman!—I suppose I shall have a gentleman too.

Mrs Wil. O! no doubt.

Ca. Then there will be a pair of us—But you're sure now you are in earnest?

Mrs Wil. Will you go and be convinced I am?

Ca. Come along, Mrs Wilkins—I think that's your name.

Mrs Wil. At your honour's service.

Ca. Great men are apt to forget such trifles—but I'll call and see you now and then, though I am a Colonel's son.

Mrs Wil. We'll always think there's nothing too good at the George Inn for your honour.

Ca. But hark'ee, give old Jacob a hint not to forget himself and make too free.

Mrs Wil. I hope, sir, we shall never forget ourselves in your presence.

Ca. Well, well, I hope not, good woman—Colo-

nel's son!—What a fool I must be, not to have found out this of my own accord!—But it's a wise child knows its own father.

[*Exeunt. Mrs* WILKINS *ridiculing him.*

SCENE III.

A Drawing Room at the House of SIR OLIVER OLDSTOCK.

Enter CHARLOTTE *and* HARRIET.

Char. How you teaze me about this all-accomplished Sir Charles!—I can't abide him!

Har. Can't abide him!—I don't think it possible for any woman actually to dislike him.

Char. Yes, he's the last person breathing I should elect for my *caro sposo;* the man's well enough as an acquaintance; he's lively; does not want for understanding: but the best of him is, the talent he possesses for discovering the ridiculous, wherever it is to be found—then he paints it in colours so high, and so pleasantly ill-natured, that a woman takes him in her suite, as the natural appendage of superior understanding, to shew that her wit has raised her above the power of ridicule, and that she has the chief laughers in town upon her own side.

Har. What you praise him for is, in my mind, the only exceptionable part of his character.

Char. Lord! what harm is there in a little good-humoured ill-nature?—Besides, what would you have people talk of when they meet? As politics are to the men, scandal is to our sex—these two subjects are the vast magazines of the major part of

our ideas; between them the heads of half the nation are furnished.

Har. Have you seen Mandeville to-day?

Char. Poor Harriet! now do I perceive the cause of all this extraordinary zeal for the interests of the handsome baronet; you still are apprehensive, if you don't provide me with a husband, I shall take your beloved Mandeville from you.

Har. He is sole heir to Colonel Talbot's immense fortune; I know your father will proceed to the last extremities.

Char. Dear Harriet, rest perfectly satisfied in my friendship for you; I never will have him: I don't know what I would not do to avoid it: My heart is at present a virgin tablet, on which Love has not written a single character; however, should things come to the worst, you yourself must be my deliverer.

Har. As how?

Char. Even by taking wing, with your beloved swain, for that blessed spot where law forges no fetters for the heart; and Hymen, with a smile upon his cheek, and his torch burning clear, lights consenting votaries to the temple of real and lasting felicity. Heaven and a generous uncle be praised, who bequeath'd me ten thousand pounds independent of my father, I am not obliged to sacrifice my own, and my friend's happiness!—O glorious Independence!—thou parent of every virtue—no wonder so many noble hearts emptied their crimson fountains to preserve thee!

Har. I'm ashamed, Charlotte, to have harboured a suspicion but for a moment, that a mind like yours could act unworthy of itself.

Char. Now, to put my theory into practice.—Here comes Mandeville; do you step into the next room, where you may overhear our conversation,

and you shall be entertained with a prologue truly antimatrimonial.

Har. Dear Charlotte, I am already perfectly satisfied.

Char. But I insist on your going: it will entertain you. [*Exit.* HAR.

Enter MANDEVILLE.

Char. My dear Mandeville, I was just wishing for you; if you had staid much longer, I should have been insupportably vapoured; nothing runs in my head but our marriage: But I was thinking, as the fondest couples have certain dull hours that hang heavy upon their hands, how we two shall kill time during those spiritless seasons.

Mand. I suppose we shall follow the example of other people—do all we can to make one another uneasy.

Char. That's one way, to be sure, of killing time: but we shall grow tired of that at last; don't you think so, Mandeville?

Mand. When I entertain a good opinion of a lady's wit, it rids me of all apprehension on that score.

Char. Sir, your most obedient.

Mand. I thought your cousin Harriet was here.

Char. My cousin Harriet!—Lord! what's my cousin Harriet to the purpose?—I shall grow jealous of you at this rate. I wonder, Mandeville, what star shed its influence when our marriage was first talked of; no two people breathing agreed better.

Mand. I always thought you the pleasantest companion imaginable.

Char. We were commonly laughing at one body's expense or another.

Man. And as soon as we are married, I fancy every body will be even with us.

Char. Heigho!

Mand. What's that for, madam?

Char. Not for a husband, I assure you; it was only a requiem to friendship, going to be laid in the grave of matrimony. Methinks we two are preparing ourselves for the penance of our future union, as knights-errant of old prepared themselves for the toils of chivalry. I've read somewhere, that those champions of distressed damsels at first wore heavy weights to their armour, which they fancied, on removal, would give a comparative lightness to the galling load with which they were about to tax their shoulders.

Enter HARRIET.

Har. Just now, Mr Mandeville, as I parted from my cousin, a servant came and told me that your uncle, Colonel Talbot, was arrived—Your father, Charlotte, has received a letter from him—But what do you think? It seems he has a son nobody ever heard of before.

Char. A son!—Now, Mandeville, if you can be content with your mistress, and a moderate income, I'm satisfied you may have her; as the bulk of Colonel Talbot's fortune will certainly devolve to his son, depend upon it, my father will no more press my ladyship on your worship.

Mand. Madam, my uncle may dispose of his property as he pleases—I sincerely rejoice at his safe arrival in England; and as he has an heir, I shall be the first to congratulate him on the event; and I hope that heir will prove an heir to his virtues.

Char. You are a generous fellow, Mandeville; and, if it had not cost you so dear, I should congra-

tulate you on the certain prospect you may indulge, that we two shall never be one.

Mand. My dear Harriet—

Char. Now, why don't you say, my dear Mandeville? One as naturally follows the other as the echo does the sound.

Mand. The occasion, ladies, I trust, will apologise for my leaving you thus abruptly.

Char. O, go, go; you have my ample consent—But, Harriet, will you let him go so easily?

Har. How can you be so ill natured?

Char. She says she gives you leave to go: but it's on condition that you do not dedicate a second of your time to any human being but herself, longer than common decency requires it. But, Mandeville, do you and I part as we ought, a betrothed pair?

Mand. Yes, Charlotte; for we part wedded friends again.

Manent HARRIET *and* CHARLOTTE.

Char. Now, Harriet, are all your apprehensions removed?

Har. They are, my friend; Hope sits smiling at my heart, and once more chears it with a prospect of happiness. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An apartment at SIR OLIVER OLDSTOCK'S.

Enter SIR OLIVER. (*Alone.*)

Sir Ol. This is a devilish lucky hit, the Colonel's having a son; it enables me to provide for both my niece and daughter—I expect from the latter a good deal of contradiction in this business, but I like that. I shou'dn't love her half so much as I do, if she hadn't spirit enough to contradict me—it shows she has an opinion of her own, and gives me an opportunity to prove that I have one also; but of a much superior kind, and upon occasions of a very coercive quality; it's one time in a hundred I can get any body to contradict me; but men of large independent fortunes never hear the truth—nobody has spirit enough to oppose them in discourse—Henceforward, I am determined to take no man by the hand, who does not speak and look, when we come to debate, as if he would knock me down in an argument. Well, I think I shall be as happy as a married man can be, when my girls are disposed

of—my wife, to be sure, has a most unaccountable humour, to suppose I'm jealous of her, now she's in her fifty-fifth year—to do Lady Lucretia Old-stock justice, she was once a charming woman; but at present, I think her as plain a piece of goods, as a man could meet between Temple-Bar and Whitechapel—Here she comes, brimful of news.

Enter LADY OLDSTOCK.

L. Old. Was ever any thing so wonderful!

Sir Ol. Nothing upon earth! what's the matter, my love?

L. Old. Why, haven't you heard that Colonel Talbot has a son?

Sir Ol. A son!—a dozen, I dare be sworn, if he would but own them; an old soldier has generally children in all quarters of the globe.

L. Old. Sir Oliver, you're a censorious man, and judge of every body by yourself.

Sir Ol. Upon my soul, my dear, you allow me too much credit; I never was a man of all that gallantry; no, no; I had a domestic magnet that attracted and fixed all my affections; united to such a woman as Lady Oldstock, who could be a rover?

L. Old. Why, to do you justice, Sir Oliver, you have, upon the whole, made a very good husband; and if it was not for the weakness of your temper in one particular, we might live very happily.

Sir Ol. (*Aside.*) Now she's off.

L. Old. If, indeed, I was one of the giddy flirts of the day, it would be another thing—but a woman, of whose truth you have had so many years experience, to be jealous!

Sir Ol. I tell you again and again, I am not jealous.

L. Old. Ah! Sir Oliver! I wish you would make your words good; if any man of the least tolerable

appearance pays me a common mark of respect, don't you immediately sneer and say that fellow has a design upon me?

Sir Ol. So I do: I always think that person has a design upon another, to whom he gives their own way in every thing; no, no; if I am to choose a friend, and an agreeable companion, give me the honest fellow who contradicts me.

L. Old. Then you are not jealous!

Sir Ol. No.

L. Old. No?

Sir Ol. No; damme if ever I was jealous of you!

L. Old. You are now more provoking, if possible, than ever; when you find I hold your ridiculous suspicions in contempt, you would wound me another way, and mortify my pride, by insinuating, that I never had attractions sufficient to have a civil thing said to me, like other women.

Sir Ol. Then it seems, my lady, you have had your civil things said to you, like other women, in your time?

L. Old. There, there it broke forth! What it is to be married to a jealous husband!

Sir Ol. Well, all this I can bear, because I like contradiction—I consider the mind like a spring; the more you press it, the more vigour you lend to its elasticity; since I can remember, I always delighted to be of a different opinion from other people—There's something wonderfully flattering to human pride in being singular—but in marriage it is absolutely necessary—man and wife are like contending qualities of bitter and sweet; they naturally quarrel, and exist by downright opposition.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

L. Old. I'll submit my cause to the judgment of Charlotte.

Char. Submit your cause to my judgment: my dear ma'am, by no means; in all cases of matrimonial litigation, the parties should be tried by their peers.

Sir Ol. Right, my girl! now, in order to qualify you to be impannelled on suits of the kind, I was that moment thinking about moving the court of Hymen, to show cause why a rule should not be granted to provide you with a husband.

L. Old. Whenever you marry, Charlotte, if you wish to be happy, above all things avoid a temper like your father's.

Sir Ol. And like your mother's also, if you wish your husband to be happy.

L. Old. I clearly perceive my company is not agreeable.

Sir Ol. Your strange turn of mind, I confess, Lady Oldstock, is not altogether so agreeable; but you see it does not make me angry.

L. Old. It's that that tortures me—if I could vex him, it would be a proof I had some power left; but he treats me like a child.

[*Exit* LADY OLDSTOCK.

Sir Ol. It's a spoilt one if I do.

Char. Dear sir, let me follow her.

Sir Ol. You shan't budge a step after her.—Soothing her in these humours is only adding fuel to fire. Your mother, Charlotte, was born a coquette, and will die one. She was a reigning toast in her youth, and to this hour expects the adulation of those days. She had a whole army of lovers; and what, you'll say, ought to make me set a very high value upon her indeed, either from necessity or choice, she hung like an overblown rose on the virgin thorn, full four and thirty years waiting for me; but come sit down, and let me talk to you. (*They sit.*) I have for some time back

observed, Charlotte, that the match I proposed to you with Mandeville does not meet your wishes.

Char. I confess, sir, it never did—besides, I know that gentleman's affections to be engaged elsewhere.

Sir Ol. I understand you; he's fond of my niece Harriet; well, in the name of happiness, let them go together; I'll never mention his name to you again; nor indeed shall I propose any match to you, upon which I may expect rational contradiction.

Char. Now, sir, you speak like my father—O, how my heart springs with gratitude and joy, to hear those generous words from your own lips!

Sir Ol. No, my girl, you shall never be sacrificed at the altar of Plutus—I say, sacrificed—for what is it, in fact, but a sacrifice, to throw away a fine young woman upon a man it is impossible she should like; as many father's do every day, who love money more than their children.

Char. The liberality of these sentiments delight me, they are so exactly in conformity with my own! Dear sir, you have given me such spirits—Do you know, when you asked me to sit down, I expected to have a quite different kind of conversation with you?

Sir Ol. I suppose you thought I had a golden calf to propose to you for a husband?

Char. I own I was so ungenerous.

Sir Ol. A fellow with nothing but gold in his pocket, and lead in his pate; ha, ha, ha!

Char. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Ol. How liable we are to be mistaken in our surmises of other people's thoughts! No, no, my girl, I have no such match to propose to you—I have a husband for you, it is true, in my eye; and a rich one too—but it is not to riches you object—it is to the man; and provided he be agreeable, I imagine

no woman in her senses can suppose a husband may be too rich?

Char. Provided riches be obtained without leaving a stain upon the principles, it is happiness to possess them, as they give us so much more ample power of distributing felicity. I never was that romantic fool to imagine there can be happiness where there is not independency: grant me that, and all the wealth beside which the earth contains, or the sea devours, should not bring me to sell the free election of my heart, or barter for gold, what gold could never restore me.

Sir Ol. Give me a kiss, you jade! you are your father's own daughter; but every body tells me you're the picture of me; and if the Colonel's son be but as like his father as you are yours, you'll be the handsomest couple in Great Britain.

Char. (*Rising.*) The Colonel's son, sir!

Sir Ol. Yes, my old friend, Colonel Talbot's son; one of the finest young fellows I am told—but no fop—he has none of the vices and follies of your young butterflies of fashion.

Char. No, sir, nor any of their accomplishments, or I'm misinformed.

Sir Ol. It was an excellent thought of his father's, to have him brought up in a snug private way.

Char. And yet, I'm told he has lived some time in a snug public way.

Sir Ol. What, Charlotte, have you been listening to any scandalous reports of the youth?

Char. A pretty youth I understand he is for the husband of your daughter—I am told he was actually a waiter at some horrid place near Smithfield.

Sir Ol. O infamous scandal!—He waiter at some horrid place near Smithfield!—The next report, I suppose, will be, that you were bar-maid at the same place; and that I'm an old tobacconist, who

supplied the house with cut and dry, from the sign of the Black Boy in a neighbouring alley.

Char. I am petrified at the very thoughts of the brute!

Sir Ol. Look you there now: she knows I love contradiction in my heart, and therefore seems averse to the match, because she thinks it will please me. But, come; you and your mother and my niece shall go pay the Colonel and his son a morning visit.

Char. Sir, as you insist upon it, I will go as I would to any other great natural curiosity.

Sir Ol. Was ever any thing like this! she has heard a scandalous report of a man, and she won't wait to be undeceived by her own eyes and her own ears: this is downright inconvincible obstinacy, not rational, well-founded contradiction; and I hate the one as much as I love the other: besides, I ever thought you a girl of too much sense to lay any kind of stress on a tale of mere rumour.

Char. But if rumour should speak truth?

Sir Ol. He's so great a liar I would not believe him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment at MANDEVILLE'S.

Enter JOHNSON *and* COLONEL TALBOT.

Johns. He's a rough diamond, sir; he requires a little polishing, I must confess.

Col. Good masters may remove his ignorance, and good company polish his manners; but there is a meanness in the turn of his person, and the cast

of his features, which is insuperable; but take man in every point of view, and he will be found the creature of habit; his body, like his mind, is subdued by education.

Johns. I wonder, sir, you never wrote to any particular friend in England, to have inquired about him, when you received no letter about this man, to whose care you committed him.

Col. Who could I trust? None of my own family!—Then, what solid friendships do you suppose are contracted at the age I left England? I was then but twenty, all my intimates were young fellows, sunk in pleasure and dissipation: if any thing like friendship had subsisted between us, the many years we were asunder had dissolved the tie—His mother, I knew, was dead; and from Wilkins' silence, I concluded that he also had paid the debt of nature; therefore I desisted from writing, thinking it was in vain to hope for any certainty till I had myself reached England.

Johns. I should not have believed it possible your honour could have had such a son, let his education be what it may.

Col. I own, Johnson, the weakness of a father induced me to believe I should have seen him emerging from the low contracted sphere to which his fate had consigned him, by the native energy of his own powers; and flattered myself with the pleasing dream of surprising a young man with affluence and distinction, who in obscurity had acquired virtue to deserve them.

Johns. I beg your honour's pardon:—but, as I cannot see the least likeness of you in this young gentleman's face, I suppose he resembled his mother.

Col. His mother!—She had the countenance of an angel!

Johns. Then he differs from you both devilishly! —But, sir, the sooner you provide him with a fencing and a dancing master the better; the latter of these gentlemen seems indispensibly necessary, if it's only to teach him to walk; for no raw recruit on the first day of drilling was ever more pigeon-toed.

Col. Where is he now?

Johns. I left him, sir, very busy over his luncheon.

Col. His luncheon!

Johns. Yes, sir; a small morsel he takes before dinner, just to stay his stomach, consisting of about a pound of beef steaks and a tankard of porter.

Col. Send him to me. (*Exit* JOHNSON.)—I fear he's incorrigibly gone, beyond the power of reformation.

Enter MANDEVILLE.

Col. Dear Mandeville, what course do you advise me to pursue with this untoward boy? With all his faults, I must consider he is my son, and pity, whilst he compels me to blush for him.

Mand. Sir, we must endeavour to form him as well as we can: but I am rather inclined to think we shall never be able to give him the graces.

Col. He's not three and twenty—that's young:—we have many began later in life to acquire the rudiments of those sciences in which they afterwards arrived to the highest pitch of eminence.—Have you been able to discover how the natural bent of his temper inclines, or if he has any strong propensities?

Mand. Why, sir, from what I can collect in my short acquaintance with him, the natural bent of his temper seems inclined to gallantry; and if he

has any strong propensity, it is to the game of skittles.

Col. No matter how low and vulgar the game be, it shows a spirit of play in him, and it must be crushed: but if he has a turn for gallantry, it gives me the greatest hopes of his reformation. The society of an accomplished and beautiful woman softens and refines the roughest nature; she imparts, by a secret magic, her elegances and her graces; and to converse with her is a kind of study that insensibly polishes her admirer.—But what reason have you to suppose he is inclined to gallantry?

Mand. He has imparted all his amours to me; but one in particular, which very much diverted me indeed:—After having been successful with barmaids, young milliners, and tailors' daughters, out of number, Cupid shot him from a cheesecake battery, and he fell in love with a pastrycook's daughter; which, O terrible! was the cause of his having an affair of honour with an attorney's clerk, in which both parties were bound over; but in painting this Helen, who bred the contention, how shall I do him justice at second hand? Teniers lent him his pencil for her waist, and Titian for her head; for she was shaped like a Dutch cheese, and her locks were as red as a carrot.

Col. I have sent for him; and as I shall examine him closely, in order to search if there be any latent seeds of ability which culture may bring forth, I wish you, Mandeville, to be present, and that you will also assist me in the inquiry.

Mand. Certainly; as my cousin, I think it a duty I owe him.—O, here he comes with Johnson.

Enter CALEB *and* JOHNSON.

Ca. (*Speaks as entering.*) You don't know what's

taste; my hair's the nattiest thing in town as it is dressed now.

Col. Don't you know, sir, I sent for you?

Ca. Ah, father!—Cousin! are you there too?

Mand. You don't attend.

Ca. Attend! no: I hope, I shan't attend any more.—Well, father, you sent for me; now, what do you want, my old cock?

Col. (*Turning away with disgust.*) It is in vain to think of cultivating a soil like this!

Mand. His manner is terrible, to be sure: but we must correct him.

Ca. Correct him! Why, what have I done to be corrected? I thought I was corrected enough by my last father.

Col. Would that correction had taught you to speak!

Ca. That it did; and often to squeak too, till you could hear me two streets off.

Col. Speak to him, Mandeville.—There is something so barbarous in every thing he says or does, that I can't bear to look at him.

Mand. You'll excuse me, dear cousin, for giving you a little advice; but as I mean it well, I'm sure you'll not be offended.

Ca. Bless your heart, you can't offend me! I'm one of the best-tempered boys breathing:—but what's the matter with old Firelock? He seems in the sulks.

Man. He's not pleased with your manner and address; it is too rude and abrupt: you should never approach him without evident marks of respect.

Ca. O! I understand you; I should always make a bow when I come into a place where he is.—Ecod, with all my heart: but what set me wrong, was hearing it said, that to have no manners at all was the best of breeding.

Mand. Ceremony is altogether as ridiculous as rudeness is offensive; you must avoid both.

Col. Have you ever read any thing in your life?

Ca. Why, do you think I can't read? Then I tell you I can; and write and cypher too.

Mand. He doesn't doubt that; he only wishes to know what kind of reading or books you are fond of.

Ca. Then you may tell him, I am fond of histories.

Mand. That's a good hearing, faith! If he's fond of history, he must possess from nature a strong inquisitive mind under all this unpromising d'abord. Men educated in a low sphere of life, however uncouthly they express themselves, often manifest a strong intellect; and on being put to the test, discover a fund of knowledge the better-educated man would not expect from a slight acquaintance with them: I consider such minds like rich metals, as yet unpurified from alloy; but let it once be known that the ore is gold, and the refiner's hand will soon bring forth the bullion.—As you are fond of history, you have no doubt dipt into the histories of Greece and Rome?

Ca. The best of their histories.

Mand. Whose were they?

Ca. Why, in the first place, I have read Don Bellianis's History of Greece, and the Seven wise Masters' History of Rome.

Col. Ask him no more questions.

Ca. Then I've read the History of Colonel Jack, and the History of the English Rogue, and the History of Moll Flanders.

Mand. He appears as well read in modern as ancient history.

Col. I don't know any thing more mortifying to human pride, than to pass the better part of a man's life in toil, anxiety, and danger, accumulating wealth, to leave it to a fool at last.

Ca. You can't think, father, how sensible money makes a fool look, and how foolish a wise man looks without it.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr Serge, your honour's tailor.

Mand. He's come to take measure of my cousin for his regimentals.

Ca. Regimentals! Why, am I to be a colonel as well as my father?

Col. Sir you're to be a soldier.

Ca. A soldier! Why, what's all this? Am I to go for a soldier, after all?—Has Doll Blouze been with the parish officers?

Col. I have procured you a commission! no son of mine shall waste his youth in ease and indolence, dissipating that wealth I so hardly earned: the greater part, it is true, he shall enjoy; but he shall first prove by his courage, and his services to his country, that he deserves it.

Ca. There's not a boy within the sound of Bow bell of a better spirit; I'll fight any man in England of my weight and inches, with fair fistesses, for a guinea—aye, damme! if I don't, and lay down first.

Mand. Hadn't you better step to the tailor?

Ca. Presently, presently, cousin—But now I think of it, I'll not step to him; let the tailor step to me.—A captain step to a tailor! Impossible! that's bidding a fieldpiece dance the hayes after a thimble.

Col. I insist upon your going this moment.

Ca. Why, the old boy's in his tantrums—Cousin, a word in your ear: there's one thing before I go, I must beg of you.

Mand. What's that?

Ca. Why, as you and I will be hand in glove,

as a body may say, you'll call me Caleb, and I'll call you Tom, Frank, Harry, or—what is your name?

Mand. My name is Frederick.

Ca. Frederick! what a pretty name! I wish my name was Frederick. Can't I be new-christened for one name as well as another?

Mand. (*Aside.*) Till you're new-born, I fancy nothing can be done with you.

Ca. But I was going to tell you—if you call me Caleb, never do it loud, especially in company.

Mand. For heaven's sake, why?

Ca. Why, if you was to cry out, as thus now, Caleb! (*Bawling out.*) I should cry, "Coming up, sir!" though you made a duke of me. [*Exit* CALEB.

Col. Well, Mandeville, what do you think?

Mand. Hope is left us the worst of times; however, I do not despair of making something of him yet: what I dread most, is introducing him to Charlotte.

Col. Why cannot man make over his mind, like his property, to his children? Any distinguishing quality in all other animals survives in the same species by hereditary descent for ever; man continues upon the earth only in his name and his revenues. O, that he should leave behind him his least valuable part, and all that made him good or great should sink into the dust with him!

Enter JOHNSON.

Johns. Good news! good news, sir! the Carnatic is arrived safe.—Captain Crevelt's servant is just come to acquaint you, that his master and Count Pierpont will be here immediately.

Col. Good news, indeed, Johnson; and heavy and afflicted as my heart is, your tidings cheer it. The Count, Mandeville, is an officer of infinite

merit; he was my prisoner during the war, and is warmly attached to English manners and our glorious constitution. But, Crevelt!—to know the merit of such a man, you must be acquainted with him.

Mand. Is he an Englishman?

Col. Yes, and you may judge of his merit as a soldier, when I tell you, he has arisen from the ranks, at the age of three-and-twenty, to the commission he now holds of captain. He's the reverse of this ill-fated boy we have been speaking to. He is self-educated; for, with scarcely any advantages but those he derived from a most noble and excellent nature, he is the man of sense, the scholar, and the polished gentleman. His father, old Crevelt, was no more than a serjeant, and served in Germany under Lord Granby; he brought this young man with him to India, whilst yet a boy; the first day he ever was in action, he saw his father fall; and he was found after the battle among the slain, close to his body, apparently lifeless, with loss of blood, as if he had died in the pious office of defending a parent.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Captain Crevelt, sir.

Mand. Let us go and receive him; my heart burns with impatience to call such a man my friend.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

MANDEVILLE'S *House.*

Enter MANDEVILLE, CREVELT, *and* COLONEL TALBOT.

Crev. I quitted England, Mr Mandeville, when a boy, and never was in London in my life before. I am charmed with the appearance of this noble city, in which the ease, convenience, and safety of its poorest inhabitant seem consulted.

Col. There is no token seen in the streets of an exhausted people, drained by a tedious and expensive war, during which Great Britain fought at more unequal odds than any nation on the earth ever did before.

Crev. So much the reverse, that I am astonished at the appearance of opulence and prosperity to be met with every where; and the pleasing sensation I feel, to find my country in that state, is indescribable.

Col. Let gloomy politicians continue to predict and foresee calamities that exist only in imagination; whilst the genius of industry continues to

smile upon the labours of the husbandman, the mechanic, and the manufacturer, and whilst strict probity is the character of England in her dealings with all other nations, the resources of this country will be found inexhaustible: and though its glory may be veiled by a momentary cloud, it soon recovers its former splendour.

Enter CALEB *in Regimentals.*

Ca. Here I am, father, in full feather.

Col. What, sir, is your dancing-master gone already?

Ca. Bless your heart!—no master of any kind for me to-day; I never put on a new suit of clothes in my life, that I did not make holiday.

Man. (*Aside to the* COLONEL.) We had better, I think, in some degree give way to him: you cannot expect immediately to reform manners so long confirmed by habit.

Col. (*Aside.*) I believe you're right; so I'll try what effect indulgence may have on him. Well, it shall be as you would have it; this day shall be devoted to pleasure and amusement. Crevelt, give me leave to introduce you to my son.

Crev. I don't know any circumstance of my life affects me more than the high honour I now enjoy. [*Introducing himself.*

Ca. Why, look ye, young man, as my father desires it, I'll shake hands with you, with all my heart: but I would not make so free with every old soldier's son.

Col. How dare you, sir, insult a man of his merit with language so gross?

Ca. Why, isn't he an old soldier's son?—pretty company truly, to introduce me to!

Crev. Sir, the humility of my birth I acknowledge; but must tell you, this is the first time it

ever brought a blush into my cheek—I am choked with rage—Unused to insult, I cannot receive it without indignation even from the son of Colonel Talbot!

Col. I insist upon your asking that gentleman's pardon.

Ca. Why, is he a gentleman?

Col. A man of his worth, his honour, and ability, is a gentleman, though sprung in the lowest vale of society.

Ca. Nay, if you say he is a gentleman, I ask his pardon with all my heart—Nothing so common now-a-days as one gentleman's asking pardon of another; it makes up a quarrel in a trice.

Crev. Sir, I accept your apology.

Col. (*To* CALEB.) But, sir, I will go farther with you—You must ever consider that man with respect: learn to esteem him, and it will do you more honour than your birth has done.

Enter Servant.

Ser. The gentleman from the India-House, sir, that was here before to-day, has called again.

Col. Let him know I'll wait on him immediately. [*Exit Servant.*

(*To* CALEB.) Young man, I wish to undeceive you in one particular; seize all those opportunities of instruction I mean to give you, and redeem the time you have lost, which, if you neglect, your provision from me shall be merely independence; my name you may disgrace, but I think it a crime to bestow riches on one who would abuse them; even that youth, whose birth is so inferior in your eye, I should consider as united to me by his merit in nearer ties of kindred. [*Exit* COLONEL.

Ca. (*Strutting about.*) So then, I am to be disinherited after all, and for an old soldier's son too!

Crev. What's that you say, sir?

Ca. Say, sir!—Damme! he looks so fierce, I don't know what to say to him.—These old soldier's sons are so used to cutting of throats, it's the devil to quarrel with them.

Man. I am ashamed of you, cousin—if you proceed in this manner, you must be locked up from all society.

Ca. I'll beg his pardon again: I know that's all he wants.

Crev. I'll spare you, sir, the mortification of descending to so humiliating an act—in respect to your father, I overlook every thing you have hitherto said—I now coolly behold all that hath been past through a different medium; and rather feel for a youth, who, from his prospect of immense wealth, has been, perhaps from his childhood, surrounded with sycophants, who never let him know what it was to be acquainted with himself, and persuaded him into an opinion, that wealth supplies the absence of every accomplishment and virtue.

Ca. I don't rightly understand you, captain; but I fancy—only you mince the matter—that you meant to say I was much better fed than taught—Well, no matter—Are we good friends again?

Crev. Very good!

Ca. Then give your hand. (*Aside.*) He, he, he! I can't help laughing, after all, to think of such a fellow's being a gentleman!—But I say, captain, they tell me you are a devil of a fellow for fighting: now, do you see me, as I am an officer as well as yourself, I'd be glad to know how you generally found yourself before you went into the field of battle.

Crev. Much as I do at present.

Ca. What, no more frightened!

Crev. No, sir.

Ca. Come, come, no tricks upon travellers, captain; do you think I'm such a fool as to believe you?

Ca. Sir! (*Terrified.*) He looks at me like a tiger—I'll ask him no more questions—he has half frightened me out of my commission already—Eh! (*Looking out.*)—Ecod, yonder I see my father talking to two fine girls—I'll go have a peep at them—Cousin Mandeville, good bye—Captain, your servant—(*Stifling a laugh.*) A gentleman truly!—What a fine thing it is to be born one—it saves a world of trouble in learning. [*Exit* CALEB.

Mand. The story of this unhappy young man, and how his education came to be so much neglected, is too long to acquaint you of particularly, at present, but you see what he is, and, I hope, estimate an insult from him accordingly.

Crev. I think no more of it—but my heart bleeds for his father.

Mand. You talk of leaving town to-day—why, dear sir, will you so suddenly quit friends, who, of all things, covet your society? Is the business which calls you from us, of that urgent nature, you cannot postpone it for a few days at least?

Crev. It is what I ought not to do—for my relations in England (if I have any living) have never heard from me since I quitted the country; but perhaps it's better to prepare them for the meeting; so I shall write to them by this night's post, and continue your guest a little longer.

Mand. Now this is truly friendly—I wou'dn't for the world have you leave the town till after my Cousin Talbot's wedding.

Crev. Then he's going to be married?

Mand. So his father intends, as the only means of reforming him. The lady is one of those two who came here within this half hour, and whom we left

with Count Pierpont, admiring his magnificent presents from the different princes of the East, at whose courts he has been occasionally envoy.

Crev. But which of the ladies is intended for Mr Talbot?

Mand. Charlotte—she whom you so much admired: and, short as the Count's acquaintance with them is, he appears already smitten with her cousin Harriet.—Unluckily for him, she happens to be engaged.

Crev. But, Charlotte!—It is she, then, who is intended for Mr Talbot?—I think I never saw a finer girl.

Mand. She's a divine creature! and though her Adonis is so near a relation, I confess I wish her a better husband;—but I don't know how matters may terminate.—She's a girl of great spirit—has a very fine independency; and such is her disposition, that I'm confident there is no temptation in wealth could induce her to marry any man whom she did not like.

Enter HARRIET.

Har. Ha, ha, ha! I beg your pardon, Mr Mandeville, for laughing so much at the expense of your cousin Talbot; but his manner, person, and conversation, are all so truly original, that gravity itself must be provoked to laughter in his company.

Mand. It's very true, Harriet; he is a most extraordinary being, I must confess.

Har. He introduced himself to Charlotte this moment; and such a figure does he cut! He can neither walk, sit, nor stand still, with gazing at his person. Charlotte and he are together; she seems delighted with him.

Crev. Then, ma'am, she likes him.

Har. She likes to laugh at him, sir—Do, Mandeville, come, and take a look at him.

Mand. Will you go, Crevelt?

Crev. I'll just speak to Johnson, sir, and follow you. (*Exeunt* MAND. *and* HAR.)—I never saw that woman in my life before, who, in a moment, has had such a power over me.—She will not marry him, they say—but what then? Does it follow, of course, that she must like me?

Enter JOHNSON.

Johns. I understand your honour wished to see me.

Crev. Yes, Johnson; as you came to London before me, I wished to ask you, if you knew any thing of the family of this young lady your master intends his son shall marry?

Johns. Why, sir, I understand she is the daughter of a Sir Oliver Oldstock; an old acquaintance of the Colonel's—her father, I hear, meant she should marry Mr Mandeville, supposing he would be my master's heir; but when a son made his appearance, like all other worldly men, Sir Oliver changed his note; and the poor young lady is to become a sacrifice to this—I wish he wasn't my master's son.

Crev. But she won't, Johnson, be made a sacrifice.

Johns. I hope not, sir;—but, Lord! what won't money do? Don't we see money, every day, couple age and deformity to youth and beauty; a young creature, like an angel, linked to an old skeleton of dry bones!—as if the dæmon of avarice and sin had acquired such ascendancy in the world, as to bring about an union betwixt death and immortality!

Crev. Why, Johnson, you speak with great feeling and spirit on the subject.

Johns. Ah, Captain Crevelt? what a charming couple you two would make—I, who have seen your honour in the field, would expect a Granby, or a Marlborough, from such a marriage.

Crev. (*Musing.*) I promised to follow them; but the less I see her, the better for my peace; it's only feeding a passion I should banish from my heart for ever. Johnson, take no notice that I have asked you any questions concerning Miss Oldstock: should I be inquired for, I am gone to the library. Books, or my own thoughts, are the only society I am fit for. [*Exit* CREV.

Johns. Well, as long as I live, I never will think there is any thing in great blood again. Here is a son of one of the best families in the kingdom, with neither person nor mind superior to one of his father's domestics; and if we turn our eyes to the other side, we behold the offspring of an old soldier with the soul of a prince, and the head of a prime minister.

Enter NANCY, *running.*

Nan. Mr Johnson, Mr Johnson, here's a letter for you, brought by the penny-post; (*gives it*) and short a time as you have been in London, I'm sure it's a love-letter.

Johns. Aye; pray, Nancy, how have you made that discovery: Is it by the elegant penmanship of its pot-hook and hanger superscription, or by the god of love's own broad seal stamped upon it by a wafer and thimble?

Nan. Ecod, Mr Johnson, you're a knowing hand; I'll engage you have hooked in many a poor girl in your time.

Johns. But I haven't paid the postage.

Nan. That's always paid beforehand into the office with the letter.

Johns. But you know, Nancy, letters are conveyed now upon a new establishment, and for fear of mistakes, I'll even pay double postage.

[*Kisses her.*

Nan. It's mighty well! I suppose when you find this is a mistake, you'll be for having the overcharge back again. [*Exit* NANCY.

Johns. Now for my letter.—'Sdeath! it's from my sweet little Mrs Wilkins! (*Reads.*) "Mrs Wilkins's compliments to Mr Johnson; will be glad of his company this evening to tea, as she wishes to treat with him about those little matters he brought with him from India: if the two sets of china be as handsome as he said they were, she will take them both off his hands; she'll take, besides, some chintz and muslins for gowns, and half-a-dozen shawls; he need not send her any mandarins; she has more old figures than are worth house-room.

"P. S. Mr Wilkins is very sorry he can't be at home the whole evening, very particular business calling him to Hogsden."

I was afraid I should have had no postscript; but all's right I find—Yes, my sweet Mrs Wilkins I will go and talk to you about those trifles I brought with me from India; but you shall have no mandarins:—indeed, I thought you had one too many of these old figures. [*Exit.*

Enter CALEB, *followed by* CHARLOTTE.

Ca. Well, Miss; how do you like me! Don't you think I look like a captain?

Char. Like a captain! It would be doing you injustice to compare you to any one officer under his majesty: I am really at a loss for a comparison to match you with—Come, turn about, and let me see

your shapes. Mercy! what a long sword they have tied you to!

Ca. That was all my own thought: I haven't learnt to fence yet; and as I am told a gentleman is nobody till he has fought about a score duels, I was determined the first time I fought not to be overreached by any body.

Char. A very prudent resolution, I must confess! valour is by no means incompatible with discretion; but pray, sir, are you so very quarrelsome, that you expect to have all these duels upon your hands?

Ca. Me quarrelsome!—Bless your heart, I'm as quiet as a lamb.

Char. Then why do you expect to fight so much?

Ca. Because it's the fashion; and you know a man had better be out of the world than out of the fashion.

Char. Then I think you are taking an excellent method to have your choice.

Ca. Yes; fighting's quite a gentleman-like amusement: besides, it will be put in the newspapers; and I shall read my own name in print, along with the debates of Lords and Commons: and that's the cause, I suppose, of all duels.

Char. I believe duels have been fought more than once—and, O fatal delusion! perhaps a valuable life lost for a cause altogether as frivolous!

Ca. But now I am dressed, do you see me, I wish to show myself to some of my old acquaintances: therefore, suppose you and I go this evening to Bagnigge-Wells, and drink tea—the hot rolls are so nice there, you can't think!

Char. Some other time; I can't possibly go this evening.

Ca. Mayhap you think I won't pay for the tea, but I will; and moreover than that, I'll treat you to the half-play afterwards.

Char. You must, indeed, excuse me, sir. (*Aside.*) I wish I could get rid of him.—This moment poor Crevelt passed me with a dejected air—I followed him with a stolen glance, till I traced him into the library—I wish I knew what was the matter with him; I never saw a man in my life I pity so much.

Ca. (*Looking at himself.*) How they will stare at our hop, to see me in this dress!

Char. This fellow takes no notice of me; his regimentals have actually rivalled me!

Ca. (*With great delight.*) Dress I see is every thing; such a suit of regimentals would make any man a great officer. How this world goes! fine fellows are made by tailors, and tailors undone by fine fellows!

Char. My Narcissus is so engaged with his person, it would be foolish to lose this opportunity of getting rid of him; I'll drop carelessly into the library—I never saw so sudden an alteration in man's looks as in poor Crevelt's—I hope he's not in love—poor Charlotte, if the object be not in England!

[*Exit* CHARLOTTE.

Ca. (*To himself.*) To be sure, Caleb, you haven't a pair of legs?—It is not every captain who can beat a march with such a pair of drumsticks—I wonder how my legs would look in a pair of new boots—I never rode of a Sunday, but in a pair of my father's old ones—most smart captains, I observe, foot as well as horse, mount the streets in boots. So you wont go to Bagnigge-Wells! (*Looking up.*) Eh! why, she's gone!—I'm glad of it!—and now the coast is clear!—Ecod, I'll have a ramble—what signifies my being dressed, if nobody sees me?—I'll call over to Jacob Wilkins's, and take a glass with him—who knows, but one of these days, when I return from abroad a great warrior, but old Jacob may take down his sign, and hang me up over his door. [*Exit.*

Enter LADY OLDSTOCK *and* COUNT PIERPONT.

L. Old. Really, my Lord, I tremble for the consequences of this interview; if Sir Oliver should meet us, and happen to be in one of his jealous moods, it is in vain to tell him of the innocency of our conversation; he will interpret my very looks; and draw the strangest inferences from even the tone of voice with which I utter the most good-natured sentence.

Count. Il est bien extraordinaire; appears to me very strange, madame, dat people of fashion en Angleterre can be so bourgeois. Mon Dieu! en France, quand un homme est marie, ven ve marry, by gar, our friends cannot nous oblige more dan by take care of our vives.

L. Old. O my Lord, you're a refined people! we are at least a century behind you in point of civilization.

Count. But on my vord, you improve every day; people de fashion in both countries vil be ver soon les memes; a voile le difference—at present, see the difference between France and England—Un Anglois est trop brusque, too rough; un François, peutetre trop poli; but dat be fault sur cote droit, on de right side—suppose nous avons—suppose we have von traité de commerce, pour un exchange des maniers; Jack Bull is von guinea too heavy; and un Frenchman, entre nous, peutetre un louis-d'or too light: now to make a de balance even, scrape de Englis, or vat you call sweat a de Englis guinea, and augmentez le louis-d'or, and you give de polish to de one, and de proper weight to the other.

L. Old. I blush, my Lord, to think my education was so cruelly neglected, that I cannot hold a conversation with you in your own language—People of condition should always speak French.

Count. Mais j'espere—me hope you understand?

L. Old. O perfectly, my Lord; you speak the language of the graces; and that our sex understand in every country.

Count. Si j'entends vous, ma belle ange! If I understand, it is you have give me the instructions.

L. Old. How well he makes himself understood! I never heard such sweet broken English in my life before.

Count. Mais, madame! may I beg leave to solicit— [*Taking her by the hand.*

L. Old. My Lord! Dear Count!

[*Seemingly confused.*

Count. Madame, may I solicit votre pitié, pour un passion qui brule mon ame—my passion burn a my heart.

L. Old. O heavens, what a discovery is here? How fatal to the happiness of—I hope, my Lord, you will exert your philosophy on this occasion, and consider the insurmountable obstacle.

Count. Obstacle, madame! quelle obstacle to a man of my rank and fortune?

L. Old. O, fie, fie, my Lord! can a man of your delicacy talk in this strain?

Count. Ah, si vous pouviez lire—if you could read a my heart—

L. Old. Go, unhappy youth! and endeavour to extinguish a fruitless flame; that, if it continue to burn, must only prove a source of disquietude to us both: go, too-pleasing seducer! and like the faithful, but honourable Werter, leave your ill-starred sympathising Charlotte in tears! [*Affecting to weep.*

Count. My Charlotte!—No, it is my Harriet.

L. Old. Harriet!—What Harriet?

Count. Your niece, madame; that petite ange—

L. Old. My niece! Was my niece the object of all this adoration?

Count. Is there one else living deserve so much?

L. Old. Yes, a hundred, if you had eyes to see.

Count. Eh bien! Madame, what you say to my proposal?

L. Old. My niece is engaged; or, if she wasn't, you should not have her.

Count. Mais le chevalier Oldstock dit le contraire—Sir Oliver say quite different.

L. Old. Sir Oliver's an old fool, and suppose didn't understand you, for you speak terrible English. [*Exit.*

Count. I speak terrible Englis!—Mon Dieu—il est bien etrange!—just now I speak ver sweet broke Englis!

Enter SIR OLIVER.

Sir Ol. Well, Count, what says my wife?

Count. She does refuse—she vil not consent.

Sir Ol. I am glad of it.

Count. Diable! pourquoi you glad of it?

Sir Ol. Because now I shall have an opportunity of showing my authority, and letting her know you shall have my niece in spite of her.—She's my own brother's daughter; he left her an orphan to my care, and I'll dispose of her as I like; I asked Lady Oldstock's approbation, only for the pleasure of being refused it—I love contradiction.

Count. Mon cher Chevalier—you transport me.

Sir Ol. Yes, Count; contradiction's my hobby-horse; I mount him every hour of the day; and the more he kicks and flings, the greater delight I take in riding him;—I know you think me a whimsical old fellow; but you are new to our clime and our manners—we delight in thinking for ourselves—opposition is the very soul of an Englishman—he likes it in himself, and in others also; peace and

prosperity, with good eating and drinking, would throw him into a lethargy, if imagination didn't supply that spur to goad him on constantly to action.

Count. Now, mon chere pere, me vill settle—

Sir Ol. Odso, that's right—mind, the foundation-stone of our agreement is, that you settle in England:—a niece of mine shall never breed subjects to fight against her king and country!

Count. Monsieur, you have my vord of honour: and now I vill go visit my pretty miss, vat you call Harriet;—mais, monsieur, rest assure me vill die and live in England. [*Exit* COUNT.

Sir Ol. Well said, monsieur! cart before the horse. But now I am alone, let me see how my accounts stand:—I have secured the French nabob for my niece; now it would be a master-stroke if I could obtain the English one for my daughter, and thus centre the two nabobs in my own family: This son of the colonel's is a downright savage—Charlotte never could like him; or, if she could, interest tells me I should not: therefore her liking's out of the question: there's to be a division of the colonel's property between the son and Mandeville: I want the whole, if possible. The colonel's not fifty, and in my mind he's a better looking man than either his son or his nephew. Charlotte's having ten thousand pounds independent of me, makes her very obstinate; debates will run high, I fear; as, indeed, they very often do in my family; where, though I'm constantly left in a minority, I never lose a question;—it's true, I have open mouths upon me from all sides, till, like greater men, I'm fairly badgered; but it's only waiting till the strangers are all out, and I tell the house as I please afterwards.—Zounds! here comes Mandeville: I wish I could get decently out of his way.

Enter MANDEVILLE.

Mand. I have been in search of you, Sir Oliver.

Sir Ol. I wish I had known that, I'd have saved you a good deal of trouble. Well, my good sir, had you any thing particular to say to me?

Mand. Is your conduct towards me consistent with honour?

Sir Ol. I don't understand you.

Mand. How convenient it is to assume ignorance of a subject on which it is painful to hear the truth, even to the man incapable of respecting it! Honour, though shut out from the heart, will still knock at its gates, and tell the guilty, there is a register kept in the avenging court of remorse for every act of injustice.

Sir Ol. Upon my word, Mr Mandeville, you speak to me in a very strange style; this is not a manner in which I am accustomed to be addressed. You bounce in all of a sudden, transported with rage, for what cause is best known to yourself, and with a knock-me-down countenance, treat me as if my age and my rank had no kind of respect due to them.

Mand. Sir, no man honours age more than I, or more readily yields rank every respect it can claim, when that rank does not forfeit its title to esteem, by meanly sinking and degrading itself;—but, when men in superior stations behave, as if their actions were above all censure and controul, they must be told, that they are deceiving themselves, as well as the world, and that no man is suffered to injure another with impunity.

Sir Ol. Well, sir, in what particular have I injured you, to provoke the thunder of this terrible Philippic?

Mand. Can you seriously ask me that question,

when you sanction the addresses of Count Pierpont to your niece?

Sir Ol. Well, and what then?

Mand. Have you forgot your prior engagement to me?

Sir Ol. Mr Mandeville, the poet says, that "Every day's a satire on the last;" as circumstances vary, or events fall out, we are compelled by necessity to change our minds. As to my niece, whom I consider in the light of a daughter, I think it my duty, in providing her with a husband, to make the best bargain I can for her.

Mand. Sir, have you no regard to what the world will say on this occasion? The world, sir; that harsh, blind, misjudging multitude; whose slander, if it soil the ermine purity of virtue, what will it say when it has justice upon its side?

Sir Ol. Nothing that I value. Young man, when you have lived as many years with the world as I have, you'll learn to make your happiness independent of its opinion. Don't you see knaves and fools every day rise into consequence, and all from the opinion of the world—the opinion of the world, sir!—It's a mouthful of moonshine!

Mand. I believe with you, that the world is too indolent—too much occupied with its pleasures, or its miseries, to take up the business of a censor:—I fear it never examines thoroughly any man's pretensions to its favour; the more he asks, the more he generally obtains from the world; hence, folly, confidence, and vice, revel in the arms of luxury, whilst merit, proud, and retiring from the conscious dignity of genius and virtue, is suffered to perish for want of bread!—But, sir—

Sir Ol. But, no more of this debate, Mr Mandeville—the question is put, and I am going. Partial as I am to a polemical mode of discourse, I find

that there may be sometimes even too much contradiction. [*Exit.*

Mand. What shall I do with this deceitful, unfeeling man? But can I hesitate whilst I have a particle of spirit left? I'll go this moment, state the matter to Count Pierpont, and he shall resign, or fight for his mistress!

Enter HARRIET.

Har. Dear Mandeville, what is the matter?—My uncle has just parted from you, seemingly much out of temper, and the wildness and disorder of your looks terrify me?

Mand. My heart is torn to pieces, Harriet!—Indignation at the ungenerous treatment I have met with from your uncle, added to my fears of losing you, distract me.

Har. But can you doubt your Harriet? There is no power upon earth shall force me to be another's; do then, dear Mandeville! strive to calm this tumult in your mind—Betrayed by the violence of your passion, you talked of going in search of Count Pierpont—let me beseech you, not.

Mand. You were deceived, Harriet, in what you heard me say—do not prevent my going—I have business of a most particular nature calls me.

Har. I know perfectly the business that calls you—but let me conjure you, by all that regard you ever professed for me, not to think of it. You say, your fears of losing me distract you—judge, then, of the state of my heart by your own. Has Harriet no fears for her Mandeville, at a moment she sees him eat up with an ungovernable rage—about, perhaps, to hurry himself, or a fellow-creature, into eternity?

Mand. Your apprehensions, Harriet, are groundless—from what I learn of the Count's character,

I believe him to be a man of too nice honour, too equitable, too generous, to reduce me to the necessity of proceeding to extremities; I only wish to explain matters to him.

Har. I can recommend a much better course to you, and one much more likely to succeed—Go to your uncle, that good, that noble-hearted man:—tell him your story;—if any body has weight with Sir Oliver, it is Colonel Talbot.

Man. Nobody has weight with him when avarice claims his ear.

Har. You are mistaken: he is not so great a slave to avarice as you suppose him.

Mand. He is your uncle, Harriet, and I cannot speak of him with harshness.

Har. I know by your eyes, you are not so angry as you were.

Mand. I will be guided by you in every thing.—There is a fascinating power, Harriet, in your looks and accents, when you would persuade, that cannot be resisted; a melting softness clings about my heart, as I listen and behold you; there is a sure divinity in angel-beauty! You caused the tempest in my soul, and have calmed it. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at MANDEVILLE'S.

CALEB *and* JOHNSON *discovered over a Bottle.*

Ca. Come, my boy, since you won't go to Jacob Wilkins's with me, we'll tope a little here—fill your glass higher—higher yet; I'll have no sky-lights—this is a bumper-toast.

Johns. Well, what is it?

Ca. Our noble selves. [*Drinks.*

Johns. I find that you think a sentiment, like charity, should begin at home.

Ca. I do, to be sure.

Johns. We should have begun with the king and constitution.

Ca. Then here it goes;—and though it's the second toast now, it shall be the first next bottle.

Johns. Next bottle!—but, Mr Talbot, I have a particular engagement upon my hands this evening. I hope you'll excuse my leaving you.

Ca. You shan't stir a foot. [*Pushes him to his chair.* Your wine's so good—I wonder how any body can quit such liquor.

Johns. But, suppose there's a lady in the case—you won't press me to stay surely, after I tell you that?

Ca. Damn it!—take me with you!

Johns. Impossible!

Ca. Then sit down and drink with me, for I won't part with you.

Johns. What the devil shall I do. (*Looking on his watch.*) It wants but a quarter to six, and Mrs Wilkins will be waiting tea for me. [*Aside.*

Ca. Come, to the charge again, and a brimmer it shall be.

Johns. (*Aside.*) I shall get fuddled too; I have often in a frolic assumed drunkenness; suppose I practise that stratagem now to get away from him. [*Hiccups, &c.*

Ca. Why, now I look at you, I think you are getting a little forward.

Johns. But I am not quite so bad as you think; do let me go, Mr Talbot.

Ca. Do you think I have no more regard for you? I tell you, you must go to bed;—now do, go to bed.

Johns. How the devil shall I get away from him? Zounds, sir, I am not drunk. [*Appearing to be sober.*

Ca. Poor fellow! I am sorry to see you so far gone;—but I'll take care of you for this night—no, no; no going out for this night. [*Impeding him.*

Johns. 'Sdeath and fire! Will this convince you that I am sober. [*Walking firmly up the stage.*

Ca. Take another turn, and I'll tell you.

Johns. But will you let me go then?

Ca. After we have had another bottle!

Johns. Zounds! another bottle!—Well, I'll go down to the cellar for it. [*Crosses.*

Ca. Mind you don't stay.

Johns. No, no; shan't stay—(*aside*) long in this

house, now I have got out of your clutches, young gentleman. [*Exit.*

Ca. This is a devilish honest bottle—there is half a pint in it yet.—Well, my friend is gone, so here goes his health, (*Drinks.*) Poor fellow!—I never saw a man so soon drunk and sober.—Damn it, how he stays!—I long for a glass of wine; though he's not here, ecod, I'll fill my glass—a good bottle of wine is excellent company. [*Drinks.*

Enter MANDEVILLE.

Mand. What, sir, drinking by yourself?

Ca. I'm sure that's not my fault—I shall be very glad if you'll sit down and keep me company: I expect Johnson every minute with the other bottle.

Mand. I suppose, sir, Johnson has been your companion?

Ca. Yes; and a choice companion he is; only apt to get muzzed too soon.—Come, come, let me fill you a glass.

Mand. I'll drink none, sir; nor shall you drink any more; your father desires to see you instantly.

Ca. You'll let me finish the bottle.

Mand. You must drink no more! He puts me beyond all patience. [*Aside.*

Ca. Ecod, then I'll take it with me. [*Takes it up.*

Mand. Set it down, sir. [*Lays hold on him violently. Caleb, in a fright, drops and breaks the bottle.*

Ca. There. (*Looking at it.*) I have set it down, and am ready to go with you; we must be good friends again now we have cracked a bottle together. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Library.

CREVELT, *seated, with a Book.*

Crev. (*Throws the book down.*) It is to no purpose—I cannot read—This adorable girl has taken such entire possession of my mind, it has'nt room for any other object: when Mr Mandeville told me she was going to be married, and to whom, my heart died within me, for then I knew all hope was lost; but grant there was no dishonour, no ingratitude in harbouring a passion for a woman intended for the son of my benefactor, how should a low-born, abject thing, like me, aspire to one so much above him! Would not my birth be an insurmountable bar to my hopes? She comes this way.——I would avoid her, but have not the power.

Enter CHARLOTTE, *with a volume of Shakespeare in her hand.*

Char. (*Reading.*)

—— "She never told her love;
"But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,
"Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought,
"And, with a green and yellow melancholy,
"She sat like Patience on a monument,
"Smiling at Grief."——

Bless me! Captain Crevelt (*starting.*) I did'nt see you—I was quite absorbed in poor Viola's melancholy relation of undivulged love; this little picture

is so higly finished, so delicately coloured with touches of the true pathetic, that I never read it without being wonderfully affected—Don't you think it one of the finest passages in all Shakespeare?

Crev. I so much admire it, madam, that I would give the world this moment for the pencil of its immortal writer, to paint one of our sex in the same state of uncomplaining despondency.

Char. I protest you spoke those last words with so serious an air, that I'm half inclined to think you're in love yourself: if that be the case, come, make me your confidante; I'll be as secret and as silent as Shakespeare's own marble Grief and Patience: I have the music of the Avon swan this moment at my heart, and could hear a lover whisper his tale under a tree in which the nightingale sung, and the moon tipt its boughs with silver.

Crev. You speak, madam, like one well versed in the passion.

Char. And is that strange, sir, when I come with Shakespeare in my hand; a master who teaches the whole history of the passions? His keen and ardent eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, pierced into the secret chambers of the heart where the passions slumber; and woke them, as he swept his lyre divine, to all their changeful moods of pain and joy, till kindled up to madness, or to ecstasy; but when he touches upon love, though the flash be momentary, it resembles lightning, suddenly rifting the surface of the earth, and disclosing the radiant portal of a diamond quarry.

Crev. Were I to wish for another laurel on the grave of Shakespeare, it should be planted by the hand of so charming a commentator.

Char. Sir, there is a laurel already planted on his grave by one of our sex, which will flourish till the

spirit of his genius, and his writings, are no more remembered—but to the point—I have pronounced you in love; now let me know who your mistress is?

Crev. Madam, I dare not.

Char. Dare not! Is that a soldier's phrase? Courage, man; there is nothing impossible to spirit and perseverance; besides, the more difficulties lay in the road to your mistress, the better she'll like you for surmounting them.

Crev. But suppose there was a difficulty not to be surmounted!

Char. If your mistress does not dislike you, I know of no other difficulty which is not to be surmounted.

Crev. But even presuming that were the case, which I have by no means reason to imagine, I cannot think of her without condemning myself.

Char. Is she so much beneath you?

Crev. She's above my praise, and above my hopes.

Char. If she deserves all this adoration, she never will think herself above a man of merit.

Crev. Then, madam, you don't think marrying for love entirely out of fashion?

Char. I never would marry for any thing else.

Crev. (*Aside.*) Then I am undone; she loves the man for whom she is intended; and the assurance of it that I have now received from her own lips, was meant as a reproach to a passion she has discovered, in spite of all my efforts to conceal it.

Char. (*Seeing his disorder.*) What's the matter, sir?

Crev. I fear, madam, I only interrupt your studies.

[*Going.*

Char. How can you talk so? I don't know any one whose conversation, on so short an acquaintance, is so agreeable to me; this last has been particularly interesting.

Crev. It is plain, from the sarcasm of that reply, that she understands me—but I am justly punished, for my apostacy to honour, in daring to think of her. [*Aside.*

Char. He appears confused and embarrassed all of a sudden; I fear my vanity has betrayed me too far, and that I have been mistaken in the object of his affections. [*Aside.*

Crev. I have not power to speak to her. [*Aside.*

Char. No, no; I'm not the object. [*Aside.*

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, the Colonel wishes to see you immediately.

Crev. What a release from torture! (*Aside.*) I shall wait on him. (*Exit Servant.*) Madam, your most obedient. [*Exit.*

Manet CHARLOTTE.

Char. So I have as good as told a man I like him, who, it is plain, is in love with another woman: unhappy Charlotte!

Enter SIR OLIVER. (*Speaks as he comes in.*)

Sir Ol. Charlotte!

Char. Sir.

Sir Ol. Sir!—how melancholy a monosyllable comes from a woman's mouth; it sounds as dismal as a single bell after a full peal. But, Charlotte, what's the matter? I never saw you so thoughtful before: I hope it is not your intended marriage that makes you uneasy.

Char. It never gave me an uneasy moment. I had made up my mind on the subject.

Sir Ol. Well; well; let the matter rest then: however, I must confess, I should like to see my girl well married and settled before I left the world.

Char. I don't think I shall ever marry.

Sir Ol. Never marry!

Char. No.

Sir Ol. Confound those monosyllables! Charlotte, let me have no more of them; the laconic style does not become you: I wonder from whom you take it; for my part, I'm fond of the figure of amplification in discourse; and I'm sure your mother deals in an eloquence, copious at times, even to redundancy.

Char. Sir, I have not spirits for conversation.

Sir Ol. I am surprised at that, when you have every thing your own way: you won't marry this body, nor you won't marry t'other; and I, like an easy, indulgent old soul, humour you in every thing, fond as I am of contradiction.

Char. Hav'nt you all's one as held me up to sale to the highest bidder?—I was first intended for Mr Mandeville, next destined to Colonel Talbot's new-found heir.

Sir Ol. His new-found bear you should say; but, Charlotte, Charlotte, how uncandid you are! when I proposed the last match I had not seen the man.

Char. Sir, you change your mind so often, and bandy me about in so extraordinary a manner, that I shall become a topic for public ridicule.

Sir Ol. Well, and if I do change my mind often, isn't it for your good? As one project starts up in my mind better than another, in order to take advantage of that, I must naturally contradict myself. The Spanish proverb says, a wise man often changes his mind, a fool never.

Char. According to that proverb, you should be a second Solomon: who you intend for me next I cannot possibly guess; but as I never will marry without your consent, I trust it will not be deemed

undutiful, if I always retain a negative to myself, in a matter which so nearly concerns my happiness as the choice of a husband. [*Exit.*

Sir Ol. I fear, like all great projectors and politicians, I refine too much; I spin the wires that compose my nets so fine, that though they answer the purpose of deceiving the eye, when their strength is tried, a touch breaks them—What's to be done? she actually sets my authority at defiance; but this comes of rich uncles leaving fat legacies to their nieces; it converts a father into a cypher.

Enter LADY OLDSTOCK *and* HARRIET.

Lady Old. Sir Oliver, Sir Oliver, the whole world is condemning you.

Sir Ol. So much the better; a quarter of the world never was right, but the whole is always wrong; you have brought me this good news, I suppose, knowing I was out of spirits.

Har. To contract for me, without my knowledge, and with an utter stranger too! as if I had not the common privilege of a thinking rational creature!

Sir Ol. Ecod, I think you have too much of that privilege: why, you ungrateful minx, do you fly in my face for endeavouring to get a count for you.

L. Old. A count! A strange kind of count!—the fellow made love to me.

Sir Ol. Then indeed must he be a strange kind of count.

L. Old. I shall sue for a separate maintenance.

Har. And I shall sue for the little property my father left in his hands.

Sir Ol. Damn it, since you have begun, come, fire away from both sides, volley after volley; don't spare me, I'll make you raise the siege at last; contradiction's my element, as fire is the Salaman-

der's. I can't have too much of it; my opinion is impregnable.

Har. It's in vain to speak to him.

L. Ol. Speak to him, child! now he's in all his gory.

Sir Ol. Hobbes maintains that the whole world is in a state of warfare, and I believe him.

[*Speaking to himself.*

L. Ol. I say, Sir Oliver, are you deaf?

Sir Ol. But it is a wise law in nature.

Har. Dear uncle, will you listen to me?

Sir Ol. Opposition calls forth the latent powers of the mind.

L. Ol. Was there ever any thing so provoking?

Sir Ol. Your greatest men have been formed by difficulties.

Har. Every moment is big with danger to my happiness.

Sir Ol. Methinks I now resemble the memorable column of English infantry at Fontenoy, marching down between two forts, with all their batteries playing upon it: whiz fly the small shot from the left; and bang go the great guns from the right; but on we march, firm as a wedge, without confusion, without disorder, without dismay; and quit the field of battle with honour. [*Exit.*

Har. My principal fear is a quarrel between Count Pierpont and Mr Mandeville.

L. Ol. You had better speak to his friend, Captain Crevelt; for my part, I have no influence with the Count.

Har. Dear aunt, how can you talk thus? So fine a woman will never lose her influence.

L. Ol. Pray, Harriet, have you ever read that elegant fellow St Evremond's account of the lovely Ninon; she who retained her beauty and power of fascination to the age of eighty?

Har. I have never read St Evremond, madam.

L. Old. Then you have read nothing: he was the intimate friend of Fontaine, Racine, and Corneille; all the great men of his time valued his friendship: but what most endears him to me, was his esteem for the lovely Ninon—I shall never forget one of her letters, in which she mentions her first wearing spectacles; but, said that charming woman, as I had always a grave look, spectacles become me.

Har. I declare, aunt, I have always thought the same of you, when I have seen you with your spectacles on.

L. Old. But you're mistaken, Harriet, if you suppose I wear spectacles from any necessity I have for them—I wear them by way of prevention.

Har. As I hope to live, here comes the Count; he'll teaze me to death if I stay—I never saw you look so well, aunt.

L. Old. You may go, Harriet, and find Captain Crevelt—I'll once more try my influence with this Frenchman. [*Exit* HARRIET.

Enter COUNT PIERPONT.

L. Old. Well, Count: I hope you have changed your opinion since our last conversation, and that you're become a little more Anglicised.

Count. Eh bien! Madame, je ne puis pas comprendre, I no understand.

L. Old. Why, we have changed characters; you can't understand me now, and I coudn't understand you before: but, Count, I'd advise you to consider you are in England; and though it may be the etiquette in France to treat a married lady with as much attention as a single, it is in this country of jealous circumspection very dangerous: it is almost sufficient to cause a separation.

Count. Ah, Madame! have a some pity on those whom your charms enslave, quand l'amour est dans le cœur? il ait l'esprit comme lui meme? dat is, ven love is in de heart, he make a dey understand blind as himself, by gar.

L. Old. The French are certainly the most agreeable people in the world; if they transgress, they make reparation with so good a grace, that it's delightful to be on good or bad terms with them.

Count. I made von grand faux pas; but like good general, me vil profit by my loss. (*Aside.*)—Madam Oldstock is vat you call von grand bastion, or outwork: I will take a that first, and la petite citadel, mademoiselle Harriet, follow of course, by gar.

L. Old. Well, Count, I forgive you; but it's on condition that you are more circumspect in future.

Enter SIR OLIVER *at the back of the Stage.*

Sir Ol. If I could lay my hand on Burn's justice in the library, that would set me right: but I think t's a question for gentlemen of the common law.—Eh! what's all this?

[*Seeing the* COUNT *and* LADY OLDSTOCK.

Count. Madame, permettez moi baiser votre main; I must kiss a your von pretty hand in sign of reconciliation. [*Kissing her hand.*

Sir Ol. I was thinking of the common law; but here promises to arise a question for gentlemen of the civil law.

L. Old. Jealousy, Count, is a tree of English growth.

Sir Ol. It may be a tree of English growth; but it's a tree would never flourish, if a taste for French gardening did not so often make the branches sprout.

Count. Mon Dieu! quelle grand disproportion in your age and the chevalier Oldstock!

L. Old. When a woman marries very young, my Lord, a dozen years difference is nothing in the age of a husband.

Sir Ol. A dozen years! Damme, if there's a dozen months between us.

L. Old. That's a most beautiful brilliant, Count, on your finger—I think I never saw so large a one: the rich cluster of its rays cast a light actually celestial.

Sir Ol. If that poor diamond could speak now, perhaps we'd find it was not very celestially come by.

Count. To reconcile me complete, permettez moi to make you von present.

L. Old. Dear Count, I cannot think of accepting a ring of such immense value—No, no, Count, I am not such an infant as to wish to possess every thing that I admire.

Sir Ol. No, to be sure, you an't.—Why, Count, how is all this? [*Coming forward.*

L. Old. O heaven's! Sir Oliver!

Sir Ol. Yes, my Lady; does the great disproportion of our years frighten you?

Count. Upon my vord, Monsieur Oldstock, this is not behave with your usual politesse.

Sir Ol. Why, what the devil, man!—aren't you content with one of my chickens, but you must have my old hen to the bargain?

L. Old. Old hen!

Sir Ol. Yes, my Lady; when I had you first you were no pullet.

L. Old. Now there will be no end to his suspicions.

Sir Ol. Ecod, I think this is putting suspicion out of the question.—Well, my Lady, what have you to say for yourself? You asked me if I wasn't

deaf; now, are you dumb?—Damn it, say something, if it's only to contradict me.

Count. Monsieur Oldstock, je suis—I am your very good friend.

Sir Ol. You are, Count; and what's more, I find you're my wife's friend.

L. Old. Sir Oliver, conscious as I am of the purity of my thoughts, I could look down with contempt on every extravagance to which your jealous temper hurries you: but when I consider how the fairest reputations are every day injured from the slightest foundations—if it should creep into the public prints—

Sir Ol. Then I'll give you a little comfort—nobody will believe it.

L. Old. The cool malignity of his temper is even more provoking than his jealousy—I can't bear to have been all my life reproached for nothing. [*Exit.*

Count. Monsieur Oldstock—

Sir Ol. Count Pierpont, no apologies: I am not at all angry with you, nor do I entertain any suspicion of my wife—Love of admiration is her ruling passion; and as long as she lives, she'll fancy herself an object of that admiration.

Count. Vous savez tres bien my passion pour Mademoiselle Harriet.

Sir Ol. I know every thing—I now see your view in all this attention to Lady Oldstock: you imprudently made her your enemy, not knowing her character; but you have very wisely rectified your mistake—You see, Count, I'm a keen old fellow: I haven't lived for nothing so many years in the world.

Count. Mon Dieu! vous etes un Machiavel.

Sir Ol. Come along, Count. But, before you go, how do you think your friend Colonel Talbot stands affected as to matrimony? Do you imagine, if a fine girl was thrown in his way, that he'd marry her?

Count. Nothing more like, on my vord; il est un homme de gallantrie? sans doute he has a de son, if that be no objection.

Sir Ol. Objection!—he should marry for that very reason, and get more sons, if it was only to convince the world that he has mended his hand in the business. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

Continues at MANDEVILLE'S.

Enter HARRIET *and* CHARLOTTE.

Har. I am half in love with Count Pierpont for his noble behaviour—The moment matters were properly explained to him, he withdrew his claim instantly—Well, I never more will hear the French spoken ill of; they carry the point of honour to a pitch of heroism—but, Charlotte, what is the matter? Your spirits are intolerably depressed!

Char. You only fancy so from the unusual gaiety of your own.

Har. I have a great mind to send Captain Crevelt to you; you are just fit company for each other: two moping, melancholy fools.

Char. From some conversation I have had with him, I take it that he is in love.

Har. And I fancy I have a fair friend much in the same situation.

Char. He leaves town to-day.

Har. Unless you issue your sovereign commands to the contrary.

Char. My sovereign commands! How you trifle! What influence have I over him?

Har. That influence which a beautiful woman will always have over a man of exquisite sensibility —Mandeville told me he was eternally talking of you.

Char. Talking of me! Lord, I wonder what the man can have to say about me!

Har. O! a thousand handsome things, I dare say: but if you wish to be satisfied as to the particulars, you may have them from the gentleman's own mouth, for here he comes; so I'll leave you together.

Char. Then you will be so ill-natured?

Har. Good-natured, sweet cousin. [*Exit.*

Char. Eternally talking of me! Whence, then, arose his sudden coldness and reserve, when I but too plainly discovered my partiality for him? Yet I may have been mistaken; a mind possessed of so much delicacy as his, might have deemed it criminal to address me on the score of love, at a time he thought I was intended for the son of his friend, Colonel Talbot—it is, it must be so—the pulses of my heart quicken at the thought—but he's here.

Enter CREVELT.

Crev. Miss Oldstock, as I mean to quit town this evening, and possibly may never see you again, I am come to solicit the honour of a few minutes conversation.

Char. Never see me again! I hope you are not going back again to India.

Crev. No, madam, that is not my intention.

Char. O! then I understand you; it is that compound of every female excellence, of whom you spoke to me in such raptures, who is the cause of your leaving us.

Crev. I own it, madam.

Char. But you talked of never seeing me again; is your mistress that jealous creature as to exact such a promise from you?

Crev. No, madam; that is a punishment I voluntarily inflict upon myself.

Char. You do say the most gallant things with the most sombre countenance; your wit and face, Captain Crevelt, are the diamond and its foil; the dark shade of the one lends a more vivid glow to the other's sparkling brilliancy:—what an alteration the presence of your mistress would make in your looks!—could you look thus in her presence?

Crev. In the present state of my heart, I could not look otherwise.

Char. No! not if she smiled upon you?

Crev. A smile from her would raise me from despair: but that, madam——Confusion! yonder I see Colonel Talbot; this is the second time to-day he has found me in earnest conversation with her.

Char. I didn't think it possible, till now, Colonel Talbot could put me out of temper.

Crev. Will he not suspect that I am meanly stealing myself upon her affections, and attribute her dislike of his son to me?—But he comes; I cannot meet his eye in the present state of my feelings—Adieu, dear Miss Oldstock!

Char. But are we never to meet again?

Crev. It is a sacrifice, madam, that pierces, and widows my heart for ever; but honour and gratitude demand it. [*Exit.*

Enter COLONEL TALBOT.

Col. Wasn't that Captain Crevelt, Miss Oldstock, that parted from you?

Char. Yes, sir; he has just taken his leave of me, and said I shall never see him again.

Col. There is a refinement in Crevelt's temper, that to strangers makes his conduct at times appear very unaccountable; but I fancy I have discovered the cause of this extraordinary resolution.

Char. And sure, sir, you can prevail upon him to alter it?

Col. Then my lovely girl wishes he should alter his resolution?

Char. O, sir! is it possible to be acquainted with so noble, so accomplished, so brave a youth, and not esteem him? Never see me more!—

Col. It is as I suspected; and, indeed, as I wish; for who but Crevelt is worthy of such a woman? (*Aside.*) I hope, Miss Oldstock, you are now perfectly convinced that I would not purchase the greatest earthly happiness at the price of your peace of mind. Highly as my pride and natural affection would be gratified to call you daughter, I trust I can turn my eye with manly firmness from the bright, the flattering prospect; and, resigned to the dispensations of a Power who never afflicts his creatures but for wise and good purposes, point out a man in every respect, but birth and fortune, deserving of you.

Char. Birth and fortune, Colonel! despicable distinctions! When Nature asserts her superior claims to reverence, by ennobling the spirit, how low it lays the insolence of ancestry, and humbles the vanity of wealth!

Col. Madam, your words penetrate my very soul; with an aching, joyless heart, I look back to those imaginary scenes of happiness Fancy had painted in meeting with a son; the only pledge of love from the first object of my affections, and whose image still warms this desolated bosom—Birth! when I survey my own offspring, and behold poor Crevelt,

I am ashamed to think so empty a thing as family pride had ever any influence over me.

Char. But you will prevail upon him to alter his resolution?

Col. On one condition, madam.

Char. What is that, Colonel?

Col. That you will receive him as my adopted son—Your father's objections I will remove, by making him your equal in fortune.

Char. I don't know how to thank you, Colonel; but, perhaps, he's already gone.

Col. Gone, without seeing me first—impossible! But what says my sweet girl to the proposal I have made her?

Char. You are so good, so disinterested, and so generous, that it is impossible not to acquiesce in any proposal of yours: but yet I will not make you an absolute promise—mind that, Colonel—till I find you have effectually accomplished my request, and induced Captain Crevelt to alter his resolution. [*Exit.*

Col. Luckily Sir Oliver has taken a very great liking to him; and told me that he would insist upon his passing a few days at his house, previous to visiting his relations.—Though Crevelt possesses the spirit of a lion, there is a gentleness and flexibility in his nature, which cannot resist solicitation from a friend.—O my heart, be still! though I am denied happiness in that quarter whence I fondly expected it, let me enjoy it as heaven thinks proper to bestow the boon, by exerting my best efforts to impart it to the truly deserving.

Enter COUNT *and* MANDEVILLE.

Count. J'espere, Monsieur Mandeville, you are perfectly satisfy—sur mon honneur, had I known

Mademoiselle Harriet was engage, I never would pay l'addresse.

Mand. I believe it, Count; and hope you will forgive the warmth I was at first betrayed into.

Count. Mon Dieu! il est l'effervescence d'une grande ame; no brave man ever resign sa maitresse avec sang froid.

Col. Now, Mandeville, to completely remove your fears in regard to Harriet, know, I have made your peace with her uncle—would you believe it? he actually proposed his daughter to me—however, by the dint of argument, added to the influence of an old friendship, I at last brought him to reason.

Enter SIR OLIVER.

Sir Ol. Colonel, colonel, is this strict observance of treaty? the carriages are waiting for us at the door—were we not all to set off for my house immediately? did you not promise to pass ten days with me when you had contradicted me into consent at last?

Count. Monsieur Oldstock, your niece was very pretty to be sure; mais, mon Dieu! votre fille be very pretty aussi; me understand she vill not marry young Monsieur Talbot, and mon ami the Colonel vill not have her—eh bien, vat you say to me for von husband?

Sir Old. With all my heart and soul, Count—I don't know a French gentleman of a long time I have taken such a liking to—damn me! if you have not a fine roast-beef countenance.

Col. I fancy, Count, that lady's affections are also engaged.

Count. Je suis tres malheureux! all de English lady be engaged! but me be not surprised; for if de foreigner set so much value on de English lady,

vat must their own countrymen, who know them better, do?

Sir. Ol. Why, what the deuce, Colonel, is all this? You won't marry my daughter yourself;—you won't suffer your son, whatever her inclinations may be, to marry her;—and now you put the Count against her.

Col. Will you leave the lady to her own choice?

Sir Ol. The worst of it is, I must do that.—Count, a word in your ear—to her yourself—you're a devilish straight, well-looking fellow; no appearance of frogs about you, except upon your coat.—I should like to see an union between France and England, if it were only because it has been so long thought a contradiction in politics.

Count. I wish it vid all my heart. [*Exit.*

Col. How unsubstantial are all the projects of man, in whatever hope flatters him with happiness—this unhappy boy distracts me!

Sir Ol. Damn me! if I wouldn't send him down into Wales or Yorkshire—for about fifteen pounds a-year, you may get him decently boarded and clad, and educated into the bargain.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. I have been in search of Mr Talbot, sir, since you spoke to me; and have just heard that he is gone to one Jacob Wilkins's, an innkeeper near Smithfield.

Col. I am exposed, you see, already.

Sir Ol. It's your own fault if you continue to be exposed; come along, Colonel; yonder I see Captain Crevelt putting the women into the carriages: We'll drive round by this Wilkins's, and take this young mohawk by surprise; the moment you get possession of him, banish him into Wales.

Col. I will myself go in person to Wilkins's; and from his own lips learn every particular respecting this unhappy youth, from the hour I left him in his care; and as you propose going home that way, Sir Oliver, I will trepass so far upon your patience as to request you will wait for me whilst I make this inquiry.

Mand. Dear sir, don't make yourself so unhappy.

Col. What is there wealth can purchase I cannot possess; my feelings are at once a satire and a lesson to avarice. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room at JACOB WILKINS'S.

JOHNSON *and* MRS WILKINS *discovered at Tea.*

Mrs Wil. I'm sure I shall never forget the first time I was in this room; where you see Mr Wilkins has his honour the Colonel's picture up—dear heart, what a handsome man he is! it's a great pity he does not marry.

Johns. He's very much altered—consider, it's many years since that picture was painted; his face is parched to the complexion of an old drum-head, and his hair is perfectly silver.

Mrs Wil. What effect silver hair may have upon your great ladies, I will not pretend to say; but this I'll swear to; bait your hook properly with gold, and a poor girl is a trout you may take with a single hair of any colour. If it was not for his money, do you think I'd ever have married old Jacob Wilkins?

Johns. Why, no, I hardly think you would; but

why, my dear creature, has his name escaped your lips? should he possess such a treasure? the man worthy of you should always meet you with the ardour of a lover, and dart, as I do, with transport into your arms.

Enter BETTY.

Bet. O madam! madam! my master is come home, and is raving like mad at your leaving the bar, and drinking tea up stairs.

Mrs Wil. He doesn't know I have any body with me?

Bet. Lord, ma'am, to be sure he doesn't; I told him you were not well, and that you found the bar too cold for you.

Mrs Wil. You're an excellent girl.

Johns. How the devil will you get me out?

Bet. I hear his cough at the foot of the stairs—dear madam, he's coming up.

Johns. 'Sdeath, I'll run and shut myself up in that little room yonder.

Mrs Wil. By no means! that's our own bed-chamber; his bureau is in it; and as he pays his brewer to-day, perhaps it's there he's going now for money.

Bet. I have it, madam; I'll let down this window curtain, and the gentleman may get behind it; if my master asks why it is down, you may say you were so ill, the light was too much for you.

[*Drops the window curtain before* JOHNSON.

Mrs Wil. Such a servant is worth her weight in gold.

Bet. Here, madam; tie this handkerchief about your head; appear very bad indeed—there, madam—let him come now when he pleases, we are ready for him. [*Exit.*

Enter WILKINS *and* AMBER.

Wil. So, Mr Amber, you have a curiosity to see the upper part of my house; you can't think how pleasant it is; my wife can tell you what a prospect there is on my upper story.

Am. Poor Mrs Wilkins is quite muffled up; she's very bad, poor woman; I'm sorry we disturb her.

Wil. Why, Fanny, my love, what's the matter? you were very well when I went out.

Mrs Wil. I have been seized, all of a sudden, with such a terrible pain in one side of my face I can hardly get my words out.

Wil. I am sorry for this, Fanny—but what wiseacre has let this curtain down? I can't bear to shut out the light of a fine day.

Mrs Wil. Has the brute a mind to be the death of me? [*Seizing him by the arm.*

Wil. Will it do you any good to keep me in the dark?

Mrs Wil. To be sure it will, when I can't bear the light.

Am. Friend Wilkins, friend Wilkins, the light is too much for her.

Mrs Wil. You're a considerate man, Mr Amber, and I dare say make an excellent husband.

Wil. Well, well, then let the curtain remain down—come, Fanny, give your old Jacob a kiss.

Mrs Wil. I'm too fond of you, Jacob, and you take advantage of that.

Wil. No, but I don't—kiss me again, you fond fool, it will do you good.

Am. Ah! you're a happy couple; but you take the right method to be so, by giving way to one another.

Wil. But now we are up stairs, friend Amber, sit

down, and I'll go bring some money out of the next room and pay you.

Mrs Wil. I beg of you, Jacob, to take him down stairs and pay him: even your talking sets my head distracted.

Wil. My dear, I sha'nt be two minutes settling with him; it will affront him if you turn him out of the room; you shall have the place to yourself immediately. [*Exit.*

Re-enter BETTY.

Bet. Madam, you're undone, if you don't come down stairs immediately: Ned, the new waiter, saw Mr Johnson, and he as good as told me he'd acquaint my master.

Mrs Wil. What shall I do? I'm afraid to leave the room.

Bet. You needn't stop a minute; it's only squeezing Ned's hand, and slipping a sly half-guinea into it, and all will be right.

Mrs Wil. O Betty, I wish he was well out of the house—you'll excuse me, Mr Amber, a little; I'm wanted down stairs.

[*Exeunt* MRS WILKINS *and* BETTY.

Am. Don't notice me, child; business must be minded—but let me see—suppose I sign my receipt, and have it ready for him.

[*Taking out his pocket-book and ink-horn.*

Enter WILKINS.

Wil. Here is the money, my old boy;—have you got your receipt ready?

Am. I was going to sign it; but my eyes are so dim, I can't see with that curtain down.

Wil. As my wife's not here to complain of the light, I'll draw it up for you. [*Draws up the curtain.*

Am. That will do, I see plain enough now.

Wil. And so do I too—O the Jezebel.

Enter MRS WILKINS.

Mrs Wil. Ruined!

Am. My dear Mrs Wilkins, I beg ten thousand pardons for letting so much light into the room, but I declare I could not see to write my receipt.

Wil. Well, Mr Johnson, what brought you here?—what have you to say for yourself—are you come to rob my house?

Am. O! O! I fear the dimness of my eyes have made others too clear-sighted—but, friend Wilkins, don't be too hasty in judging.

Wil. 'Sdeath and fire, man, shan't I believe my own eyes?

Am. Not always—we are all apt to be suspicious at times—I'll wish you a good evening—there is my receipt:—the fondest couples will spar now and then—but I never like to meddle in family quarrels.—Wilkins, you certainly have a fine prospect on your upper story—good evening, good Mrs Wilkins.

[*Exit.*

Wil. Go, madam; pack up your alls, and leave my house immediately—if you are in want of a morsel of bread, it would give me pleasure to refuse it to you. As for you, sir, I'll take care your business shall be done with Colonel Talbot—I'll see you both beggars, and that will be some satisfaction to me.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Colonel Talbot is coming up stairs, sir, to speak to you.

Johns. Confusion! I'm undone.

Enter COLONEL TALBOT.

Col. Johnson here!

Wil. Yes, sir, Johnson; your worthy gentleman is here on a visit to that wretch, my wife.

Mrs Wil. Wretch, Mr Wilkins!

Wil. Yes, madam, an ungrateful wretch.

Col. I'm sorry, Johnson, for this; I was given to understand you were come in search of my son.

Mrs Wil. Wretch! I'll discover all, if I'm ruined for ever. (*Aside.*) He's not your son, sir—

[*Going up to the* COLONEL.

Wil. Devil! devil! what is she going to say?

Col. Not my son! speak again, woman.

Wil. But, dear Colonel, sure you won't believe what this wicked woman will say?

Col. Away, villain, and let me hear her—alarmed Nature starts up in my heart, and opens a thousand ears to listen to her.

Mrs Wil. He lost your son, sir, when he was a boy of twelve years old; and you may be sure, sir, it wasn't the kindest usage made the child leave him; the booby he palmed upon you is his own. What a terrible thing it is to lose my character, when I sent for Mr Johnson for no other reason, I'm sure, but to tell him every thing; and for fear he might not believe me, I hid him behind that curtain, that he might hear my husband himself confess it. [*Sobs and cries.*

Johns. (*Coming forward.*) This is the real state of circumstances, I assure your honour.

Col. Unprincipled, inhuman villain! let me hear the whole truth from your own lips, or by every power that's sacred and divine, this moment is your last.

Wil. Dear sir, put up your sword, and I'll tell you every thing.—What she says is partly true; your son strayed from me when he was about twelve years old; but had he been my own, I couldn't have used him better: as a proof of it, his mother, in her

last illness, came, as she often did, privately to see him, and was so well pleased with my wife's and my treatment of her son, that she gave me a fifty pound bank-note—I shall never forget the day; it was the last time I ever saw her; she hung a small picture of herself, set in gold, about the child's neck, and wept bitterly over him.

Col. Can you produce that picture?

Wil. Your son took it with him—he was so fond of it, I could never keep it out of his hands but by locking it up, which I sometimes did, as the severest of all punishments I could inflict upon him.

Col. I must have better proof, if this tale is true, before I let you escape that justice I fear is due to your wickedness. Johnson, take him from my sight, and let him be secured—I cannot bear to look at him. Tell the company waiting for me, in carriages at the door, to come in: for I am so agitated, and anxious for more particulars, I cannot quit this detested spot.

Johns. They are here, sir.

[*Exeunt* JOHNSON, WILKINS, *and wife.*

Enter CREVELT, MANDEVILLE, CHARLOTTE, HARRIET, SIR OLIVER, LADY OLDSTOCK, *and* COUNT.

Crev. Dear sir, what is the matter? Observing a confusion in the house immediately after you went in, we were alarmed for your safety.

Col. O Crevelt! I am the unhappiest of fathers; that creature whom you all suppose my son is not so.

Char. Good fortune be praised!

Col. He's son to the fellow who keeps this house. He says, my poor child strayed from him when a boy:—but this tale is so improbable, that I rather fear he has fallen a victim to this fellow's villany and avarice.

Crev. Dear sir, compose yourself, and hope human nature cannot be so depraved; it wrings my heart to see you in this distress. But who is this villain?

Col. His name is Wilkins. When I committed my child to his care, he lived at Henly: he pretends he lost him at twelve years old; and, O agony to think! if he indeed be living, he is at this moment a wandering outcast, and a beggar.

Crev. Merciful heaven! What do I hear? Can it be possible! Shall I, in my loved and honoured patron, find a fond and living father! Sir, did that man lose a son of yours at twelve years of age?

Col. Yes, Crevelt; I have no son but you now.

Crev. I am your son, sir—your happy son! that son you lost.

Col. You! You, Crevelt!

Crev. Yes, sir, the veteran whose name I bear took me with him at the age you mention from Henly, where I lived with the man you have just named, whom I always thought my father; it was the pride of poor Crevelt's heart to have me believed his son: I bore his name, and publicly acknowledged him as my father; for you, sir, could not have loved me better; his dying request to me was, still to retain the name of Crevelt, and never forget the man who made me a soldier.

Char. O Harriet! there is a chord of delight in my heart never touched before: and sure, he who made that heart now moves its springs to ecstasy by the finger of an angel.

Col. He talked of your taking with you a picture of your mother—had you ever any such thing?

Crev. I have it still, sir, and ever wore it next my heart. (*Producing the picture from his bosom.*) You see the frame is shattered;—it was by a musket-ball the day every body thought I was killed.

Col. It is indeed your mother; and see here those specks under the eye; are they my child's blood, or the tears of a fond parent?

Johnson to Caleb without. You must not come in: I have already explained every thing sufficiently.

Enter CALEB (*very abruptly*) *and* JOHNSON.

Ca. I tell you I will come in: Zounds! will nobody father me?

Col. Young man, you have been deceived; you are Wilkins's son, not mine.

Ca. Pho, pho! Father, do you think I know no better!

Johns. If you don't come out this moment, and no longer disturb my master, I'll take you by the shoulder.

Ca. Why, here's a fellow for you—forgets he is talking to a captain!

Col. That is a rank you are so utterly unfit for, that it would only expose you to unhappiness and ridicule; therefore your commission shall be sold; and for being one day my son, the purchase-money shall be appropriated to setting you up in business.

Johns. Well, what keeps you now?

Ca. You are in a devil of a hurry, Mr Johnson: I find I must put up with old Jacob again; but let me ask you one question, an't I to be entitled to half-pay for my services.

Johns. You shall have full-pay if you don't go about your business. [*Shakes his cane at him.*

Ca. Well, if I can't be a half-pay captain, I'll be a no-pay captain—for, once a captain and always a captain. [*Exit* CALEB.

Sir Ol. Captain Crevelt—I beg your pardon, Captain Talbot, give me your hand; you want nothing now but a wife, and if my daughter Charlotte—

Count. Eh bien! Monsieur Chevalier, you have forgot—

Sir Ol. Why, no, Count, I have not forgot; but you must know, that whatever my respect for you may be, there is not that man living whose alliance I so much desire as Colonel Talbot's; besides, I understand there is another branch of the family of my mind.

Count. Chevalier, I love and I respect the English, and by gar, me will have a wife among you.

Mand. It is not in words to express my pleasure —To make a bosom friend, and find a near relation, in less time than others form a common acquaintance, overflows my heart with transport.

Lady Olds. I could wish also to show how this affecting discovery touches me, if I was not apprehensive, Sir Oliver, of your unfortunate suspicious temper.

Sir Ol. Captain Talbot, be so good as to step this way—do give my wife a kiss; I know, my dear, your lips itch for it; and with all her faults, believe me, she has a heart that beats in unison to the feelings of all present, and a tear for misery and friendship.

Col. Miss Oldstock, it is your father's wish and mine to unite our families—now that I have a son I can propose to you, there is only your acceptance of him necessary to make me happy.

Char. Why, sir, if the gentleman has but courage to speak for himself—

Sir Ol. As I don't expect the pleasure of contradiction from either party on this occasion, I'll join their hands, (*joining their hands*) without waiting for an answer——there—Colonel, you are now one of my family.

Col. That assurance, Sir Oliver, seals and com-

pletes my happiness—You, Mandeville, shall share a portion of my fortune as a son; and may happiness still wait on you and your lovely Harriet—And now (*addressing the audience*), if this court-martial, to whom we appeal, acquit us with honour, I shall bless the hour my boy said, *He would be a Soldier.*

ENGLAND PRESERVED;

A

TRAGEDY.

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY

GEORGE WATSON, Esq.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Earl of Pembroke,	*Mr Pope.*
Bishop of Winchester,	*Mr Hull.*
Earl of Chester,	*Mr Farren.*
Earl William,	*Mr Middleton.*
Earl of Surrey,	*Mr Holman.*
John de Warrene,	*Mr Curties.*
Earl of Lincoln,	*Mr Davies.*
Robert Fitzwalter,	*Mr Richardson.*
French Prince,	*Mr M'Cready.*
Count de Nevers,	*Mr Haymes.*
Viscomte de Beaumont,	*Mr Claremont.*
English Squire,	*Mr M'Cready.*
French Guard,	*Mr Powell.*
Herald,	*Mr Thompson.*
Messenger,	*Mr Williamson.*
Lady Surrey,	*Miss Wallis.*

ENGLAND PRESERVED.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

Gloucester. A Hall. Flourish.

Enter the LORD PROTECTOR *and* CHESTER.

Prot. Thus far, 'tis well. Gloucester hath op'd her gates
Most opportunely for the prince. We here
May find a present safety and retreat,
A momentary calm—but such as comes,
Awful and deep, foreboder of a storm—
Ches. Let the storm burst; we'll brave it's fullest rage,
My Lord Protector—still I cry to arms!
Nursed in the lap of war, and trained from youth
To deeds of daring, with great Cœur-de-lion,
In France, in Sicily, in Palestine,

To scourge the infidels, contemn the French,
I cannot stoop to parley where I hate.
Old Chester's blood revolts against these Franks,
Against their slaves, our shameless traitor Lords.

Prot. Since thus defection triumphs through the state,
Thou might'st as well command the lonely pine,
Standing defenceless on the rocky steep,
To stop the blast, and roll it back to heaven,
As to oppose our small and wearied band
Against our barons, while thus leagued with France.

Ches. Are we submissive, then, to hug our chains?

Prot. No. Let us try conciliation's power,
Strive to subdue our restless brethren's minds:
The lenient voice of peace may call them home,
And melt the hearts that war could never tame.

Ches. England, too long by scenes of blood debased,
Too long to riot and rebellion loosed,
Hath lost for ever all her ancient pride.

Prot. And yet to England's pride shall Pembroke trust.
If that should fail me, welcome then despair;
Then death be glory: But, O native land!
I love thee so, with all thy failings love,
I still must trust thee when thou'rt least thyself.

Ches. But should'st thou, in those treacherous bosoms, plant
Remorse——

Prot. Why then our happy isle is saved,
And foreign tyrants ne'er shall vex it more.
Were all united in one common cause,
Soon should we sweep their rabble down our cliffs,
To court the angry waters for retreat;
Then, as the rocky bulwark of our isle,
Unshaken, beats the assailing billows back,

Should we, one people, owning but one cause,
Mock their vain efforts to regain our shore.

Ches. By heaven's own light! I venerate thy zeal.
I'll take the hazard of such goodly plans.

[*Distant shouts.*

Prot. Ha!—Busy are the times, each moment claims
Exertion. To my sacred charge, the prince—

Ches. First let me fly, and learn whence this alarm. [*Exit.*

Prot. (*Alone.*) What more than mortal powers my station claims!
Shaken by age, I totter with its weight;
Yet, while my country calls on me for aid,
I still must serve her, till death close the scene.
O! could the censuring multitude but know
The ceaseless cares that wait on him who rules,
Forbearance would they give, for rash reproach,
Making an undisguised abuse of power,
And not misfortune, cause of discontent.
But thou, all-wise Disposer of our fate,
If these my labours be for England's good,
Grant them success for thy once-favoured isle,
That peace and union guard her cliffs again!
So may her name to distant times descend,
Revered by mortals, and approved by thee!
How sweet this converse!—My old heart feels now—

Re-enter CHESTER.

Ches. Arms are abroad. Descending to the plain,
A force is spied along the neighbouring heights,
With many a banner streaming to the wind,
Whose bearings cannot yet be justly traced.

Prot. The strength of France is now at Dover Castle,

Another army cannot spring at once,
To meet us in the west.
Ches. O! let it come:
Our walls are fully manned.
Prot. I think each post
Sufficient for a desperate defence.
Ches. Lo! from our widowed queen, in sorrow, comes
The prelate Winchester.

Enter WINCHESTER.

Prot. My reverend Lord,
Has this alarm renewed her highness' fears?
Win. Exhausted by the horrors of the times,
Even in the sanctuary she dreads the worst:
For there, even there, the sounds of battle spread,
And, as the trumpet broke the peaceful prayer,
She wildly to her bosom caught her son,
And cried, the murderers' daggers were undrawn.
Prot. O! bid her not despair, but still believe
Our arms may triumph, and (her power restored)
She long may hold a loyal people's love!
Win. It is the parent, not the queen, that mourns.
She'll often gaze with anguish on the prince,
And bless the houseless beggar, that can strain
Her naked babe, in safety, on her breast;
But she with fearful love surveys her son,
While thus, a thorn, rankling in faction's side,
That they will pluck, or perish in the attempt.
Ches. Then they shall perish, or their passage force
Through these our bodies, e'er they reach the king.
[*Shouts increase.*
Prot. The ferment swells without. Good Winchester,
Attend, and bear the tidings to the queen.

Enter a Messenger.

Mes. My Lord Protector, joy!
The host without are of your kindred, friends,
Who, flying from the tyranny of France,
Yield up their swords, confiding in thy truth,
And hail prince Henry their liege lord and king.
Win. High heaven be praised!
Prot. Submission so well-timed
Must make atonement for their past misdeeds.
Admit the chiefs. But say, who leads them on?
Mes. I caught the tidings from the general voice.
But all, my Lord, cry out Earl William's name.
[*Retires.*
Prot. My son, my eldest hope, my hero, come!
Then Pembroke's heart is whole. My spirits flow
One way. The ruler's duties press not now
Against the parent's. I am doubly strong.
Yet for a while these feelings must I check,
And probe his spirit to the very quick.
My soul yearns on the boy. Good friends, forgive
These strong emotions.
Ches. We partake thy joy.
Win. Thus may just heaven lead every subject home,
In peace and love, to form one flock again!

Re-enter the Messenger, introducing EARL WILLIAM *and Knights, who make submission to* PEMBROKE.

Mes. Behold, my Lord, the barons here attend.
Prot. Earl William Mareschal, and ye knights, arise.
Will. O! my father. [*Approaching with eagerness.*
Prot. My Lord, as Mareschal (*coldly*)
Of England, 'tis my duty bids accept,

And prize thy services. A father, sir,
Knows not of state necessities; he feels
As well as judges, keenly feels: and when
A son pulls down that image of respect
That Nature hath infixed on filial breasts,
The father bears a sting so sharp, a wound
So deep indeed, that words of penitence
Must long, long vibrate on his deadened sense,
Ere they can touch his soul, and pour the balm
That filial tenderness alone can give.
Five sons I have, and thou, of all the five,
Hast been the one to wound my aged heart,
Cancelling the peace thy brethren's love bestowed.

Wil. O sir, these words are worse to me than death.
Heaven knows how much I venerate my sire.
That life thou gav'st, for thee I'd yield with joy.

Prot. Thy deeds have greatly proved this solemn truth.
'Twas filial love that tore thee from my side,
Sent thee to league thyself with England's foes,
And guide the battle's blind, impetuous rage,
Though I stood victim of the doubtful strife!

Will. Blot out remembrance of such dire events.
With John, oppression's lawless reign hath ceased,
And all resentment's buried in his grave.
But when he broke the charter we obtained,
When forth to war he led his hireling bands,
Marked every footstep in his subjects' blood,
While desolation followed where he went,
Our castles smoked, our wives and children bled,
And suppliant Misery knelt and wept in vain—
What medium could a free-born spirit keep?

Prot. He might have died to guard his native rights,
And not have sold them to a foreign lord.
I knelt, no minion of despotic power.

Deep in my heart our liberties I held,
But saw, with shame, this isle betrayed to France,
And trembling stood aloof, to catch the time
When I might act, and save our sacred cause.
Will. But my impatient nature—
Prot. What! impatient!
In private strifes, men may be testy now,
And now be calm. A nation's welfare rests
Not on a temper's turn.—Thou show'st thine age.
Will. Father, I stand in conflict with thy words,
Like the slight reed against the northern blast.
Yet, by the blood I'm ready now to shed
In Henry's cause, I firmly swear to heaven,
I meant my country's good in all my deeds.
Win. Nay, look, young man, through fields where freedom dwelt,
And independence scorned all foreign yokes,
Ere yet thy rashness threw our all at stake,
And see the sad reverse of former times!
See, where the stranger o'er our fruitful fields—
Will. In pity stop, thou strik'st upon a string
That vibrates to despair. Disgraceful day,
That saw us leagued with France! 'Twas madness all.
For, as the eaglet gazes on the sun
Till every object shows to him in fire,
My fancy, warmed by Freedom's fiercest flame,
Imaged her form, where she, alas! was not.
I've waked from faithless dreams to horrid truths,
To curse delusions that have damned my fame.
Prot. My son, my son! and hast thou found the faith
Of France, the tainted Herculean robe,
A pledge of peace—to torture, and destroy?
Will O father, trust thy blood that fills my veins.
Believe me true, by these a soldier's tears.
Thus let me hide my face upon thy breast.

Prot. My boy, my hero! thou once more art mine,
Thy nature pure, ingenuous as before,
Too fixed in honour for deceitful times.
Be thus, my William, ever next my heart,
My prop, my comfort. Hadst thou known the force
Of love parental, thou hadst never left
These aged arms—but well, well, well—my griefs
Are o'er, and now they will but heighten joy.

Will. My father, and my own true countrymen!
O! blest exchange for false unnatural friends!
I would not yield these feelings for all France.
Away, seditious spirits! who shall dare
Again exhaust this cup of kindred peace,
And plant dissension in our happy isle?

Prot. Now to our stations, Lords. The crisis comes,
The awful crisis of our England's fate.
Ye, whose hearts beat but for your native land,
Be firm, repress vain boasts, delusive hopes,
And let us rather contemplate misfortune;
Not thence to sicken, and make cause of fear,
But to attune our spirits to the times,
And fix at that sublimity of courage
That can admit no conqueror—but death.

Ches. This patriot energy will force success,
Though host on host oppose.

Prot. Be patient still.
We must advance, in one united tide,
Slow and impressive, like the general swell
Of ocean, rolling to its boundary cliffs,
And not, like torents of dissolving snow,
Destructive, but exhausted, as they fall.
All then to arms! Hence, banished be repose,
Hence, be our mansion on the tented field,
And all our business war; till that great day,
When England's rescued from a foreign yoke!

[*Flourish.—Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

The French Camp before Dover, with a distant View of the Castle.

Rejoicing.—Enter the FRENCH PRINCE, NEVERS, *and* BEAUMONT, *from the* PRINCE'S *tent.*

Fr. Pr. Hail to this day, this proud, auspicious day,
That sees us peerless lord of England's throne!
Our rival John sleeps safely with his sires,
And leaves a baby to resist our might.
All then is ours. Proclaim a public feast,
That full festivity through all the camp
Speak the large measure of the general joy.

Nev. Health and prosperity to England's lord!

Fr. Pr. Yes, now methinks this island part of France,
And much we glory, thus to have acquired
Such bright appendage to our father's crown.
Hence, shall one law the rival lands unite,
This fertile isle the store-house be to France,
These cultured fields for her their grain produce,

These venturous merchants brave for her the seas,
And severing waters be but as the streams,
Designed to waft these treasures to her shores.

Beau. Vast is the work your sword hath here achieved:
Yet think, O prince, whereon your triumph stands.
We cannot hold this country at our feet,
Unless her rebel children bind her down.
You've sworn to keep their antiquated laws,
And should you swerve from such fair promise now,
They may desert, nay, 'gainst us turn their arms.

Fr. Pr. We cannot keep the conquest we have gained!
I say, we can, we will. The lion's bound
In chains; and though he roar, and threat and rage,
He cannot harm his master through the toils.
We know these barons swell with bitter gall,
That we neglect to bend us to their will,
And make us minister to their caprice.
But do they think, for them we've crossed the seas,
For them we've spent the treasure and the blood
Of our own kingdom? O impolitic
And shallow men! to think we would refuse
An empty oath, to win so fair a realm!

Nev. Sire! hither come the leaders of the tribe.

Enter SURREY, LINCOLN, *and* FITZWALTER.

Fr. Pr. Most valiant sirs, a gracious welcome, all.
Why so long absent in these times of joy?

Lin. Prince, we've been watching Dover tower, in hopes
Thereon to see the flag of truce displayed.

Fitz. Lincoln saith true, and I, sir, will say true.
The English scorn those councils to attend,
Whereat their voices with contempt are heard.

Fr. Pr. Fitzwalter, whence this lack of courtesy?

Ye share our bosom's secrets, noble friends.
[*Trumpets.*
Our herald comes. Brave English, now attend.

Enter a French HERALD.

Well, man, doth Hubert own our clemency,
And yield this fortress, to save loss of blood?
Her. Dread prince! he scoffs at all your terms proposed.
Fr. Pr. The fool! did'st thou not say, his master, John,
Was dead, and threaten, should he cross our will,
His captive brother should, beneath his eyes,
Be tortured unto death?
Her. My liege, I used
Each art persuasive, and each threat, in vain.
He said, if John were dead, his children still
Survived, to whom the same allegiance fell;
And for his brother—though his heart grew sick
At those my words, yet as he held yon towers
In trust but for his king, he had not power
To bend the public to his private cares.
Sur. My generous countryman! [*Aside.*
Fr. Pr. Most insolent!
But will the garrison support the slave?
Her. He spoke, my Lord, the general sentiment.
The people swore to dash their children down—
Their wives, themselves—down yonder steep to death,
Ere they betray their king, and yield to France.
And as they saw me from the hill descend,
They sent a sort of frantic shout on high,
Confirming their decree.
Fr. Pr. Regard we not
This castle-crowned cliff, whose height alone
Withstands our conquering arms; but let us march
Against the northern lands; and when we've stormed

The very temple of the state itself,
Soon shall this altar, to its idol pledged,
Its idol, Independence, prove our prize,
And France's genius seize it for her shrine.

Sur. Never; no, never shall thy country's genius
Pluck down our independence? Sir, thou dream'st;
Thou hast infringed thine honour in the thought.

Fr. Pr. (*Aside.*) Such touchy fools!—Why, Surrey, so severe!
'Tis not for friends to peer about for words,
Thence to extract some semblance of offence.
Thou dost forerun my thought of injury.

Nev. Ye testy men, so national, so proud,
Will ye for ever thus mistrust our lord?
Who rescued you from out oppression's gripe,
Who gave you treasures in your time of need,
Who clothed your fields with troops, your seas with ships,
And set his life at hazard, for your sakes?
This gracious prince!—and now you doubt his truth,
And now you thank him with contracted brows,
And taunting words, and still more taunting looks.

Lin. Nay, good Nevers, thou wrong'st our gratitude.
We owe the very being of our cause
To his support, and feel the debt we owe.

Fr. Pr. Your cause is ours; we have one cause. We claim
No recompense but faith and truth.

Sur. If faith
Be kept with us, faith will be kept with thee.
But do thy deeds, nay, even thy very words,
Accord with that same oath thou once hast sworn,
The oath to keep our liberties entire?
We're firm to that great comprehensive bond.

This sword hath sent one tyrant to the dust;
It knows its duty for the next. No more.
Nev. Unruly man, that dares insult his lord,
All gentle as he is, with such foul threat!
I know thy treachery, know thy changeling mind,
Thy love-sick bosom, thy insidious tricks—
Thou art a traitor, Surrey.
Sur. Ha! by heaven!
Thou answer'st for that word.
[SURREY *attempts to draw his sword;* FITZWALTER *and* LINCOLN *interfere.*
Nev. Nay, nay, thy hand
Lay not upon thy sword; burst not with spleen,
Thou froward man, I've proof—
Sur. Monster, of what?
Ah! ha! a death-like freezing through my veins—
My wife!—my child!—peace—(*Aside.*) Proof of what?
Fr. Pr. O friends,
Compose this strife: keep your high mettle for
The common foe. Nevers, thou art too warm;
Our trusty Surrey spoke a solemn truth.
May every tyrant fall beneath his sword!
We know no tyrant here. (Sawest thou his look?
(*Aside to* BEAUMONT.)
Watch Surrey through these times, there's danger in him.)
Come, Lords of either kingdom, cousins all,
Hence, on for Lincoln; which will soon be ours,
And with it all the empire of the north.
Beau. These unconnected castles soon will fall,
And then our sovereign may enjoy the fruits
Of these his labours—dignity and ease.
Fr. Pr. Our present fortunes are most pleasing too.
Sweet is occasional suspense we deem,
When much to hope, and little's left to fear.

Cousin Nevers, associate with our English friends,
Lead on to Lincoln our victorious bands;
While we to London, there to hold our state,
As lord of England, with more show of pomp
Than that famed city hath e'er yet beheld.

[*Flourish.—Exeunt the* FRENCH PRINCE, NEVERS, *and* BEAUMONT.

SURREY, LINCOLN, *and* FITZWALTER (*who walks wrapt in musing.*)

Sur. Are we awake? are we on English ground?
Nay, are we Englismen? we're not, we're not—
I had forgotten—we're the slaves of France.
Good powers! there was a time—there was! O shame!
When, had a miscreant Frenchman raised his breath
Against mine honour, though destruction stood
His champion, this good sword had sent an answer.

Lin. Thy passion, Surrey, hurried thee too far—

Sur. Too far, when that insulting slave, Nevers—
Wretch that I am, I'd felled him to the earth,
Had not the thoughts of those, beyond myself,
Rushed on my heart, and tempered my hot blood.
O thou sole object of my every care,
Thou, sister-being, dearer than my own,
My best beloved Matilda! and thou, boy,
Sweet pledge, confirming this our bond on earth,
And lengthening all our loves beyond the grave!
Ye make the warrior the soft son of peace:
O! but for thee, I'd stop this tyrant's flight,
And fall a martyr, thus to save our cause.

Lin. Surrey, for shame! shake off this tender mood;
Thus to be melted by domestic thoughts,
Is soldier-like!

Sur. Yea, on my faith! it is.
He feels not as a soldier ought, who feels

Not as a man; for these same tender ties
Of love domestic, multiplied and mixed,
Through numberless sweet mazes, form the chain
Of this life's interest, and mark the way
To public duties, and to public praise,
As soldier, subject, citizen, and man.

Lin. These melting, these prevailing arguments,
Struck not thy fancy, when thy wife was left,
Thy child, thy castle, thy paternal seats,
To wage the battle 'gainst the faithless John!

Sur. 'Twas love for them that led me first to war.
For private happiness must ever wait
On public fortune; and, when John assailed
Our chartered liberties, I flew to arms
To guard the sacred treasure, and therein
To guard each sweet endearment of my hearth
At home. But since our cause of war hath ceased,
In place of one a thousand tyrants rise,
Ruin on ruin hurries, all's despair—
Panting, aghast, distracted, I recede,
And yield me up to tenderness for those
Whose safety bade me throw mine own away.

Lin. Whence all this rhapsody?——Say, what do'st thou?—

Sur. I'll seek my lovely dame, my helpless babe,
And, rooted at their side, shake hands with Fate.
What! not a word, Fitzwalter? Fare thee well.
Fare thee well, Lincoln, too. I dare ye both,
On English honour, to betray my flight.
We'll meet again perhaps, or friends, or foes.

[*Exit.*

LINCOLN, *and* FITZWALTER.

Lin. Yes, we shall meet again, but meet in blood.
Surrey may flatter; I am firm to France,
For honour, wealth, and power are her own,

And mine, through her: Fitzwalter! ho! arouse!
Speak! Art thou dreaming?

Fitz. Would to heaven I were!
O my poor country! lost, abandoned isle!
Away, ye needless trappings, ye are toys,
[*Throws down his arms.*
There are no hearts to use ye, as of old.
Woe's me! that I should live to see the day,
When England calls, through all her fields, for help,
And have not power to give her ought but groans!

Lin. Whence this despair? when conquest on our arms—

Fitz. Away, thou'rt with ambition mad, and mad
With triumph, though thy native land's the prey.
I tell thee, France respects not our great cause.
Are we, at councils; are we, in the field,
Treated as free-born Britons, equals all
With these same upstart foreigners? O shame!
O vengeance for insulted rights! Shall those,
Who once could spurn a tyrant of their own,
Submit thus meanly to their very tool?

Lin. What! hast thou caught the infection of the times?
Fly then, and fawn before young Henry's feet,
Before the son of John; fly, beg thy chains.

Fitz. No, no: Thou know'st too well I cannot. No:
Cherish the child of him who killed my child,
Cherish the damned murderer's progeny?
The pallid spectre of my daughter dead,
Would thwart my way, and rouse my passions up.
To madness, aye, to kill and not caress.
Perish the hated house!—I have no hope.

Lin. Come, come, brave man; thy fears a while suspend.
Let us rush forward to the long-sought goal;
And there arrived, we may compose all doubt,

All jealousy, or just or not, 'gainst France,
And fix our cause upon its proper base.

Fitz. Yes, I must on, through doubt and hate must on.
Unhappy man! I've no alternative.
But when our infant tyrant bites the dust,
We then may turn upon these foreigners,
Teach them to venerate our ancient laws,
To dread our vengeance for those laws attacked,
To own that independence guards our cliffs,
And, through all chances, England must be free.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

At SURREY'S *Castle. The grand Hall, ornamented with Trophies of the* SURREYS.

LADY SURREY, *and her Son,* YOUNG PLANTAGENET.

L. Sur. The evening bell hath tolled, and Surrey not
As yet arrived!—Ah me!—Joy, long deferred,
Preys on the heart like very sorrow.
Boy. Nay,
Why sighest thou so, dear mother? Art thou now
Unhappy, when my father's coming?
L. Sur. No,
Best comforter, the time but moves too slow.
I should be happy.
Boy. O yes! that thou should'st:
For all the castle seems alive and gay,
To meet Earl Surrey.—On the hill his knights
Are posted, all so bright in arms! Around
The moat his tenantry are dancing; while,
Upon the draw-bridge, sits the bard, who chants
Such stories of our ancestors, such deeds—
Is all that truth the minstrel sings?

L. Sur. Yes, boy:
And let the glorious legend warm thy breast
With emulation of thy father's fame.
Look on these walls, with various trophies hung,
The Paynim's scimitar, the Gallic spear,
The shattered standard, and the shield defaced;
And think the shades of those, who placed them there,
Still move, majestic, round this reverend pile;
Still, in the hollow murmurs of the wind,
At evening's close, from yon dark grove of pines,
Or yonder battlements sublime, they fire
Thy youthful fancy, call thee on to fame,
To swell these records of paternal worth,
And, ripe in glory, e'en surpassing theirs,
Transmit the palm of virtue to thy sons.

Boy. Would I were old enough to be a soldier,
Go with my father, and fight, side by side!

L. Sur. O! may thy manly prime fulfil the hopes
Thy childhood gives! Be virtuous for my sake,
And I will bless the bitter pangs I've borne,
My child-bed groans reflect upon with joy,
To think I've given to my native land
A guardian hero, and a faithful son.
O ecstacy of thought! maternal bliss!
When my own child, by all the world approved,
Comes to my bosom to demand the meed
Of praise parental, to confirm his fame!

Boy. Hark! the sound of horses—no, 'tis the wind,
That howls among the branches of the firs.

L. Sur. My very heart sprung wildly with the thought
That Surrey—said he not, that ere the dark
He would arrive?

[LADY SURREY *goes towards the great window.*

Boy. The letters said so, mother.

L. Sur. I see no object on yon dusky plain;
Far as my eye can stretch, 'tis vacant all;
And night, in dark-blue vapours rolling, sweeps
Along the horizon. Haste, my Surrey, haste,
And let this poor heart know content once more!

Boy. I wish my father would arrive.

L. Sur. He will,
My child: he'll surely come! he'll come ere long.
Thou'rt like thy father, now; like what he was,
When youth's soft tints still wantoned o'er his face,
And when he first—O, bless that heavenly time!
Drew from my bosom a congenial flame.
Ye seats of Surrey, witness of our loves,
How oft, within your halls, the midnight lamp
Hath burnt unheeded; while enwrapt I leaned
To hear the lover's in the soldier's tale:
Or, 'neath your high o'er-arching trees we've sat,
At still of eve, to watch the pale-orb'd moon,
And hear night's songster call, throughout the grove,
The sweetened echo to increase his song,
Till silence was, and we in silence joyed—
Ye seats of Surrey! your lost lord returns,
Those days of bliss domestic to renew,
And bid, once more, the festive voice of peace,
Through all your haunts, be heard!—Hark, hark! I hear—

Boy. Yes, yes, it is. (*Horn sounds.*) There, there! the bugle-horn!

L. Sur. He comes, he comes! ye heavens, be praised! he comes!
John, let us meet the hero. O my heart!
I pant to fly, and yet—my tottering knees—
Give me but fortitude for this sweet trial!
His footstep!—O!—kneel for his blessing, boy.
My Surrey—

[*As* LADY SURREY *advances, enter a* KNIGHT, *bloody, and supporting himself upon his*

lance. The Lady screams, and the Boy flies to his Mother.

Kni. Dame, forgive—

L. Sur. Who, bloody man,
Who art thou?

Kni. O, my honoured mistress!

L. Sur. Mercy!
That voice!—

Kni. Thy faithful Eadwald.

L. Sur. Horror! O!
Horror! he's dead—that sight—he's dead, he's dead!

Boy. My father dead?

L. Sur. My child, my child, what are we?

Kni. Softly, sweet lady; he is still alive.

L. Sur. Ye powers of mercy! take my thanks for that!

Kni. But—

L. Sur. "But!"—In pity to my miseries, tell,
O! tell me all at once.

Kni. Thy noble Surrey,
Suspected of the French, was forced to fly,
Ere yet his plans were ripe: his route was traced:
Our chosen band, assailed on every side,
Fell, man by man, defending their loved lord,
Who, like a madman, dealt destruction round,
Till, fainting—

L. Sur. Fainting! Ah! then he did die?

Kni. No, dearest lady; faint with toil he fell,
And prisoner but to numbers, bade me fly
To tell thee he was safe: he gave a look
At mention of thy name, that might have moved—
But tis enough—madam, in truth he's safe.

L. Sur. How is he safe, a prey to vengeful foes?
A prey—O! we are lost, my child, we're lost
To every joy. This sudden death of hope
Disturbs my judgment. Tell me, sir—alas!
Where can I turn me?

Kni. Here must thou await
The issue of these wars, and trust in heaven
That Surrey's virtue must ensure his—
L. Sur. Death!
Triumphant malice never can endure
That he should live, whom, living, it must fear.
Perhaps even now—distraction!—I must go.
Boy. Nay, mother, wilt thou leave me all alone?
L. Sur. My child, my child, O! do not drive me mad.
Boy. If that I were a man—
L. Sur. Would unto heaven
Thou wert! Yet I am strong to think and act.
Woman hath oft her sex's bounds o'erstepped
To fill the measure of unruly passion:
And, when all nature prompts me to the deed,
When virtue calls me, with inspiring voice,
Shall I refuse to show an equal fire,
And, for a husband, rise above my sex?
No! I will forth, and seek his prison gloom.
Kni. Do not give way, sweet mistress, to such thoughts.
Thou can'st not travel through a hostile land,
And brave the horrors every step would show.
I scarcely stole my journey through the night;
For, 'mid the darkness from each hill to hill,
Responsive, blaze the signal fires: along
The roads, the frequent noise of armed troops,
And call of watchword, mark the foe at hand:
While, o'er the neighbouring fields, the doleful screams
Of peasants plundered by the greedy French,
Warn of the dangers that await such track.—
Thou'lt sink a victim to these scenes.
L. Sur. No, no:
The mind, enwrapt with one o'erpowering thought,

Yields not to fears, would harrow it, if void.
I am resolved—wilt thou conduct my steps?

Kni. I'll bind my wounds, and follow thee—to death.

Boy. O! let me go with you, pray, pray.

L. Sur. These times
Of blood are not for tender babes to brave.
O heaven! what am I doing?—Doubt, away!
Thy grandsire Pembroke will protect thee, John,
Till I return—till I return? Well—peace.
Come, Eadwald, call thy strength and spirits up;
I'll take the peaceful pilgrim's staff and garb;
Do thou the same, and we shall cheat the foe.

[*The* KNIGHT *retires.*

Boy. Then thou wilt bring my father back with thee?

L. Sur. O! O! Good powers, assist me!—So I hope.
Unhappy island, prey to civil war!
Such are thy miseries, such thy fearful state!
The helpless infant's robbed of its support,
A parent's tenderness:—the widow sinks,
In silent anguish, to her grave: the wife—
O ye who pant, in expectation high,
To welcome home your hero to your arms,
Beware! he will not come: O ye, more blest,
Who fearless press him, joying, to your heart,
Tremble! to-morrow will pull down your joy.
Most awful period! I can hardly hope.
But come, thou virtuous love, and keep my soul
To that high tone a husband's safety wakes;
And may just heaven these trials bless at last!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A large Gothic Hall at Newark. The LORD PROTECTOR, WINCHESTER, CHESTER, *and* EARL WILLIAM, *assembled at midnight, previous to the battle of Lincoln; attendants bearing torches, and the back ground heightened by the Barons' banners, and the spears of the Guards.*

Win. Yes, manly sufferers in the cause of truth,
With pious fortitude await the dawn,
And unto heaven to-morrow's battle trust.
Prot. Lords, on to-morrow England's fate depends.
The siege of Lincoln castle must we raise,
And from possession of the city drive
Yon foe, or here at once the contest yield.
Then think, great spirits, free-born Britons, think
On this terrific crisis, and, inspired
With dauntless energy in such a cause,
Go forth to battle, and the day is ours.
Will. I burn, I pant to hail the approaching dawn.
Win. Though France, with myriads upon myriads, come,
And in her strength rejoicing, count us nought,
Yet may her widely scattered powers be turned,
If thus, superior to all fear of death,
And conscious of the smile of heaven, we strike
With one concentred force.
Prot. But should we fail,
And mad rebellion triumph, round our prince
We'll throw our swords, and sell king Henry's life
For nothing cheaper than our heart's last drop.

Ches. On terms so glorious we're content to die.
Win. Go then, ye warriors, to the fields of death.
Fight the just fight, your country's rights assert,
Defy the foe, for heaven's on your side.
Prot. O sacred love of our own native land,
Come, with thine energy, inspire our souls!
O sacred love of our own native land,
Send us triumphant o'er each tyrant foe!
L. Sur. (*Without.*) Admit me to the Lord Protector, sirs.
Ches. Pause; for a female voice breaks on mine ear.
L. Sur. (*Without.*) The Lady Surrey seeks her father, Pembroke.

Enter LADY SURREY *with her Son.*

Prot. My child, Matilda!—whence this wild demean?
Why hast thou left thy castle? wherefore, thus,
With my young grandson, at this hour of night,
Seek'st thou ——
L. Sur. O sir, I have a tale of woe—
I am so lost—Thou seest, before thine eyes,
Thy daughter, tumbled from the height of hope,
Of fancied bliss, to—mercy! what? perhaps—
But know, my Surrey in his flight is ta'en,
And now—I know not what hath chanced ere now.
Prot. Sweet dame, have hope.
After to-morrow's struggle I'll dispatch
An herald with proposals for exchange
Of many noble prisoners of France.
L. Sur. Send all your French, 'twill not avail. I know
They dare not lose my husband. I've no hope,
But to entwine my thread of life with his,
To beg for entrance at his prison-door;

They can't deny me that. I come to place—
Great Lord! what am I doomed to bear!
Will. Matilda,
Alone thou can'st not go. Disguised, I'll brave
The piercing look suspicion wears, and lead
Thee, sister, spite of death, through this wild land.
L. Sur. No, by my sufferings, no! One I have lost,
One hero, to my country: She can bear
No second loss in thee. To battle go,
And victory hang upon thy sword! I'm fixed.
Prot. O happy land, whose daughters are so fair,
And though fair virtuous, even as my child!
Yet hear, Matilda—
L. Sur. I'm prepared for all;
Have weighed events, and cannot now be moved.
All that I ask—there, there's the pang I dread—
All that I ask, is guardianship for him,
Thy best protection for my darling child.
Take him, my father, take him to thy breast;
Keep him with tenderness as I was kept;
Let him be such as Surrey's heir should be.
Prot. Boy, thou'rt mine own.
Will. To me, even as my son.
Boy. Yet I would follow my poor mother's steps.
L. Sur. My child!—O sir!—best brother!—I'll away,
Or these wild ecstacies will shake my mind.
God bless thee, boy. Remember all my words:
I shall return to comfort thee again.
O! be it so! teach, sir—I know thou wilt—
Farewell. Almighty Being, to thy care
Take him! Farewell, my angel—once—farewell!
[*Exit.*
Prot. Poor dame! but this sad trial shall not last.

Excuse me, friends, that private griefs have touched
My public state. But now, my Lords, to arms!

Ches. And let us bind ourselves by solemn vows,
Ne'er to return, unless with conquering swords.

Prot. Yes, thus we swear to yield our lives, in pledge,
To save our king, our altars, and our laws!

[*Flourish—Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

Within the city of Lincoln, after the battle. Flourish.

Enter the LORD PROTECTOR, WINCHESTER, *and* EARL WILLIAM, *with soldiers.*

Prot. This is indeed a triumph, this the day,
That gives to freedom promise of success.
Win. 'Tis strange, the French, with all their numerous band,
Should yield the city such an easy prey!
Will. The expiring efforts of a free-born race
Prove more tremendous than yon myriad's threats.
Prot. Lincoln thus gained, without expense of blood,
We may—but where's Earl Chester?
Will. In the fight,
I saw him, with a troop of cross-bow men,
Forth sally from the castle, where he gained
Admission from our friends, and chase the foe.
Win. Heaven grant him safe! [*Shouts.*
Prot. That shout of victory—
Will. Yes, see the antient hero comes himself!

Enter CHESTER *hastily.*

Ches. Joy, joy! my glorious co-mates! war's the word
We've driven the slaves—they darted down the hill—
They're scouring o'er the plain, like frighted hares,
E'en trembling at the wind that blows around.

Prot. Thus, my brave Chester, hast thou proved thy words.

Ches. Armies of prisoners have we ta'en to-day,
But shed no brethren's blood. O! 'twould have moved
Your hearts, my Lords, to've seen our fiery troops,
When, in the rebels, they beheld their friends,
And gazed upon their kindred's faces, stop,
In pride of victory and the rage of war,
And, touched by pity, weep upon their necks.

Prot. My glorious countrymen! thus Britons fight,
Disdaining thus the exterminating sword;
Justice alone can animate their arms.

Ches. They turned their vengeance solely on the foe,
Who, scattered o'er our fields, no quarter find;
For there the peasantry, with cause enraged
At all their late exactions, take revenge.

Prot. Alas! unhappy island! I could weep
To think o'er all the miseries thou hast borne:
But 'tis my duty now to change the scene.
Dispatch our heralds through the country round,
Proclaiming general pardon to all ranks;
And that King Henry conquers but for peace,
And to deliver England from its yoke.

Enter a Messenger abruptly.

Whence in such haste?

Mes. All, all, my Lord, is lost!
A mighty fleet from France was off the coast,
With troops unnumbered, by the Lady Blanch,
Sent to the prince, her husband. Long ere now
They will have spread wide o'er the Kentish lands,
Though they must grapple with a well nerved race:
But all is vain, so numerous is the fleet!

[*The* PROTECTOR *turns mournfully aside.*

Win. Alas! alas! when will our troubles cease?

Prot. Softly, but have not the Cinque Ports their fleet
In readiness to meet the foe?

Mes. Their force
Is small—

Prot. Small let it be; I will not yet
Despair.

Win. Had the troops landed?

Mes. No, my Lord,
But nothing could oppose—

Win. Heaven could oppose!
We're in the hands of one who will not leave
The just.

Prot. No measure's left to save our cause,
But to attack the tyrant ere this force
(Should it effect a landing on our coast),
Can march to London; for their powers, if joined,
Might baffle all the strength we've just acquired.
To London then, my Lords, to London all;
There to obtain our freedom or our graves.

[*Flourish—Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

At London. A Court-yard of the Tower.

Enter the FRENCH PRINCE *and* BEAUMONT, *with attendants.*

Beau. This puissant fleet and army, come from France,
Will soon confirm my prince's empire here.
Fr. Pr. By holy Denis! these fair proofs of love,
From Blanch, our royal consort, touch our heart.
We purpose to command her presence soon
In our new kingdom, to receive and share
This well-won crown; methinks 'tis fairly ours.
Beau. Ere this I trust all England owns your sway.
Each minute with important news must teem,
Telling how Lincoln falls as London fell.
Fr. Pr. An angel bearing tidings of great joy—
Look where Nevers approaches!

Enter NEVERS.

Cousin, well?
Nev. Dread sire!
Fr. Pr. On with thy tale, we are prepared
For all.
Nev. Then let my tongue forego the task
Of telling that which pains to think hath been.
Fr. Pr. What!—can it be!—Are ye no victors?
—speak.
Nev. Alas! alas!
Fr. Pr. Ha! coward, cease.

Nev. Believe,
My liege, we fought—
Fr. Pr. Like miscreants as ye are.
Had we been there, ye had not dared to fly.
Nev. Fitzwalter's rashness 'twas that broke the ranks;
Though Lincoln for his earldom fought, he fled;
The English, sire, they lost the day to France.

Enter LINCOLN *and* FITZWALTER.

Lin. O Prince, your army's ruined!
Fr. Pr. Traitor, no;
'Tis false.
Lin. Sir!
Fr. Pr. Or, suppose our army's lost;
Who were the cowards that betrayed it?
Fitz. Who?
Ask your Nevers, my Lord; we know them not.
Fr. Pr. Nay, 'twas your treachery damped our Gallic fire.
Lin. So far from treacherous, lo! my troops are here,
Firm in the cause, and panting to retrieve
Their laurels lately lost.
Fr. Pr. Away, away,
We scorn your artifice. Ye love the foe.
Ye're English still.
Fitz. And such will ever be.
For came you not, my Lord, as England's King,
To rule o'er English? Where then's the reproach?
But, that I love the foe—you know full well
I hate young Henry from my very heart,
And while he sends one soldier to the field
Fitzwalter will confront him until death.
Fr. Pr. Go, go, and vent thy spleen unto the winds.
Your cause we here forsake, your aid despise:

For know, false men, officious rebels, know,
That France herself is coming to these shores,
To guard that crown wherewith ye've decked our brows.

Lin. Gracious heaven! do we live?

Beau. Now, on your coast,
Hundreds of vessels, loaded with fresh troops,
Have safely fixed their prows.

Nev. Most joyful news!

Fr. Pr. Another army soon will follow this;
That by a third be strengthened, till this isle
Shall boast no lords but those of Gallic blood.

Fitz. Now, by St Edward!—Down, my swelling heart!
It is not yet the time. (*To himself.*)

Lin. Yet, prince, reflect—

Fitz. (*Aside to* LIN.) Cease, Lincoln, cease. The die's for ever cast,
And but one way remains.

Fr. Pr. Ye droop, proud Lords!
But, O beware! for ye are in our power.

Lin. Sir, for a while, permit us to consult
With our confederates.

Fr. Pr. Yet remember well,
Suspicion's eye is fixed on all your deeds.

Fitz. Sir, we shall act as best becomes our state.
[*Exeunt* FITZ. *and* LIN.

Fr. Pr. We hate this stubborn race. Each man we meet
Seems, from the scowl that knits his angry brows,
To hide revenge and murderous thoughts within.
Give orders, Beaumont, that the Earl of Essex,
And that same subtle Surrey, meet their fate;
They, and the other slaves in Baynard's castle,
We cannot spare them to the foe.—Nevers!

Nev. My liege!

Fr. Pr. Forget our hastiness. We now
Perceive thou wert betrayed.
Nev. My gracious lord!
Fr. Pr. Say, know'st thou whither Pembroke bends his course?
Nev. A knight o'ertook us, sire, upon the road,
Who said the English were upon their march
To London.
Fr. Pr. Pembroke dare march to London?
Our troops not yet arrived.—We could have wished,
And yet we want them not. Brave cousins, rouse!
Let us arrange our well-appointed powers,
That those adventurers may rue the day
Whereon they brave the matchless force of France!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Dungeon within Baynard's Castle. SURREY *discovered on a Bench, his Armour lying by him, and a Lamp burning.*

Sur. Yes, this proud heart at last must be subdued.
I'm now the wretch whose state I most abhorred.
O! fiends of France, ye've found the only means
To conquer Surrey; for I've fought from morn
Till sun-set, smarting o'er with wounds, wherein
The wintry wind hath frozen up the blood,
E'en unto agony; and I have marched,
Beneath the noon-tide summer sun, parched, faint,
And with my burning armour scalded o'er,
I've borne each pain to which a soldier's doomed,
And never sent forth one painful groan:

But thus ingloriously, for ever, thus—
Despair, despair! the future's darker still.
[*Takes up his sword.*
The ruffians treat me with contempt, and leave
My arms; for what? there's eloquence in this.
L. Sur. (*At a distance*) Surrey!
Sur. (*Not attending to the voice.*) My own, adored
Matilda! pshaw! away!
[*Throws down the sword.*
Still fond remembrance, 'midst my wildest starts,
Calls thee to soothe the tempest of my soul.
I live not for myself.—For thee I'll bear
What, had I no such angel for my guide,
Might make my horrors—no, no—I must not
Brood thus o'er my cares.
L. Sur. (*Nearer.*) Surrey!
Sur. (*Starting.*) Ha! what! (*Pauses.*)
These noisome vapours will affect my brain.
O cruel fancy, wherefore thus torment,
Waking so often, on my ravished ear,
The music of her voice, too soon to die
In air, and leave me sickening at the cheat?
LADY SURREY *appears at the top of the stage.*
Alas! I must root feeling from my heart.
L. Sur. (*Flying to* SURREY.) He's there, he's
there! indeed, himself!
Sur. My wife!
L. Sur. I have him, hold him, clasp him to my
heart.
Sur. Madness of ecstacy! delirium too
Delicious e'er to cease! 'tis truth itself!
L. Sur. They fain would have persuaded me to
stay,
(*Rapidly.*) And let my dearer life droop all alone.
They all have failed.—I heeded not my friends;
The monsters too, I've triumphed over thus,

For I have got thee, Surrey, tricked them all,
Thus, thus; ha! ha! ha! oh! oh!
[*Bursts into an agony of tears.*
Sur. Angel mine!
In pity, sink not with thy feelings thus.
L. Sur. No, no—my spirits have been too much tried,
And this last ecstacy—ah me! my heart
Is lighter now. My Surrey!
Sur. Is she here?
Matchless Matilda! art thou here indeed?
Yes, it is she; my heart, in feverish fits,
Knocks at my breast, and tells it is no dream—
And our sweet infant, is he well? and where?
L. Sur. Well, with his grandsire Pembroke.
Sur. Bless him, bless
The cherub! by my troth, dear wife, mine eye
Runs o'er to think on him.
L. Sur. Sweet, kindly drops!
Sur. And thou, blest dame, how did'st thou reach these walls?
How brave the journey? How evade the foe?
L. Sur. Woman, aroused by pure and virtuous love,
Defies all Nature's obstacles combined:
Her soul, exalted even above itself,
Over hill, and precipice, and rocky glen,
Through roaring torrents, and through mountain storms;
Yea, all the perils of the ocean's self;
Swift as the winds she'll wing her fearless flight,
Snatch, amidst death, her great inspiring prize;
Then, struck with what she's past, her courage lose,
Her dangers swell, and sinking on herself,
Be all the timid female o'er again.
Thus have I set defiance to my state;
Thus, as a pilgrim through the land—enough:

I have my Surrey.—But this dreary cell!
[*Looking round.*
O! O! how different when we parted last!
Sur. Forget the past, we'll ne'er part again.
L. Sur. O never, never. Said I never? ha!
Where doth my frenzy hurry me? for now,
Even now, they come to tear me from thee.
Hark! hark!
Sur. What hardy wretch will dare the deed?
I clasp thee now for ever in my arms,
And, like the drowning seaman with his plank,
Will ne'er relinquish thee, e'en as I perish.
L. Sur. Alas! we must be parted once again:
I've bribed a tender-hearted guard for this,
This little moment of felicity;
For I have stolen hither, not to fix,
But to destroy captivity. O hear!
Sur. I stand, all hope and all amazement. Speak.
L. Sur. When to her fate bowed England in despair,
Despairing too, I meant to share thy griefs
Within these walls, all places then the same.
But since old Pembroke, like th' immortal sun,
Though aged, not less powerful, before
Him drives the storm of war, to wreck the French
Who thus up-blew it on our ravaged shores;
Since expectation, elevated, stands
Trembling to see, and calls throughout the realm
All men, to see those French adown our cliffs
Pushed headlong—
Sur. Madness! I no more can bear
This abject state. Thy words have driven the blood,
That with despair lay curdled at my heart,
To beat again in every pulse to war.
What! when the youth of England, all on fire,
Snatch deathless glory on th' embattled field,

For Freedom conquer, or in Freedom die;
Must I here like a captive tiger rage,
And fall at last by some base ruffian's hand?
By the great God of battles!—

L. Sur. Thou shalt not.
Loose is this pilgrim's robe o'er all my dress.
Take it, my staff, scrip; wrap thine armour o'er,
And fly. Ere such mistake can well be known,
Thou wilt have gained the wood that skirts the Thames,
Where, with thy favourite courser, waits a squire.
And as for me—

Sur. Virtue incomparable!

L. Sur. Here will I rest in silence all the night;
And when the guards discover—

Sur. Nay, no more.
Thou'rt talking to a rock. I needed not
This effort to adore thee. Yet reflect,
My country can command a million souls,
Great and heroic, to defend her rights:
But thou, O! thou can'st boast one, only one;
Should he desert thee in this fearful place,
Who will protect, and soothe, and comfort thee?

L. Sur. If but for me thou doubt'st, O! doubt no more.

[*A noise and clashing of arms heard, the* LADY *flies to* SURREY.

My husband!—

Sur. Fear not, there's no harm to thee.

L. Sur. Me, me! O! would to heaven they meant but me!

[*Noise louder.* SURREY *and the* LADY *pause.*

(*Voice without.*) Ha! struggle st thou? thus, Essex, thus—

Essex. (*Without.*) Off, slaves,
Not so—

(*Voice without.*) Down, down—

[*A deep silence.* SURREY *stands in an attitude of listening, and* LADY SURREY *in that of agonizing suspense, till a heavy groan, bursting from* ESSEX *as he expires, is heard.*

L. Sur. (*Wildly.*) O save him, save him, save my Surrey!

Sur. Silence! O silence! There is no one here.

L. Sur. I heard their weapons ring. I heard the cry
Of death.—They shall not kill him.—Help! O help!

Sur. This clamorous grief confounds—but let them come;
They'd better combat, with a single spear,
The wildest ramping lioness of the woods,
Robbed of her whelps, and howling for revenge,
Than face me now.

L. Sur. Hark! but hark! they come—there!—

Enter the FRENCH GUARD.

[LADY SURREY *snatches up* SURREY'S *sword (who seizes his battle-axe), and throws herself before him.*

L. Sur. Monsters of hell! here, strike him through this heart.

Fr. Gu. Madam, these cries endanger—

L. Sur. Do they not
Come to murder Surrey?

Fr. Gu. No, no.

L. Sur. Swear, swear;
Deceive me not, or—

Fr. Gu. We have now in charge
To watch Earl Surrey's life: the orders that
Gave death to others brought reprieve for him.
But, madam, there are scenes of blood without
For thee unfit.—Fly, fly, while yet thou can'st.

L. Sur. Fly!—O! whither?—to despair and madness?

Sur. Now, now, Matilda, be thyself indeed.
O! if thou lov'st me—

L. Sur. Mercy, mercy, heaven!
Sir, sir, canst thou behold us thus, and not
Be moved? [*To the* GUARD.

Fr. Gu. My heart is touched, yet what can I—

Sur. What? Thou hast often, in the fields of war,
Stood face to face with death but to discharge
Thy duty. If by pity now thou'rt touched,
Thou'lt surely hazard that, in such a cause,
Which to blind chance—

Fr. Gu. Show me but how to save—

Sur. And thou wilt risk thy life?

Fr. Gu. If thou can'st prove
Success will likely—

Sur. Do what now thou say'st,
And I will make the hazard greatly worth:
Thou shalt have lands within my earldom—wealth—
Be taken to my heart—

L. Sur. These, these in earnest now.
[*Giving jewels.*

Fr. Gu. Too generous English, ye have even my life.

Sur. Then thou must aid my flight this very hour.
I know that thou the access can'st command
To the great western window: thence we may
With safety drop, and from the wall below
'Tis easy to escape.

Fr. Gu. May death be mine
If I should fail!

Sur. Come, come, cheer up, my love;
Till now, I never saw one ray of hope.
Haste, haste.

L. Sur. Where, where? I will not leave thee now.

Fr. Gu. Madam, in truth thou must, or we may all

Be lost: for if another guard should come
Suspicion would arise—thou must depart:
Say (if thou art stopped), thou cam'st from Hubert d'Oisle.
The sign is "Blanch," the countersign "Castile."
Thou may'st in safety pass.

L. Sur. My Surrey, what?

Sur. Courage, my heroine, be as thou hast been.
Soon as the bell beats one, within the wood
Expect me. Nay, no sorrow now—thou must—

L. Sur. Pardon a few unmeaning drops, that thoughts
Which well I cannot justify force from me.
We shall at morning meet.

Sur. No more farewells.

L. Sur. No, we shall meet so soon.

[LADY SURREY *goes to the door, and after gazing upon* SURREY *returns.*

My only hope!
O if we never meet again! I'll not,
I cannot leave thee thus.

Sur. Then we will die
Together.

L. Sur. Die? no, no. Forgive my fears.
'Twas a last effort. I'm myself again.
I go, I go. [*Exit with the* GUARD. *Scene closes.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The wood near Baynard's Castle. A Storm.

Enter LADY SURREY *slowly.*

L. Sur. All's silent here! I surely heard a cry,
Or fancy acts too fearfully upon me.
'Tis strange he doth not come. 'Tis past the time.
Fatal walls! your bloody scenes still haunt me!
Surrey should be here ere this. They murdered
Essex—hark! murder, when once at work—ha!
[*The bell beats two.*
Soon as the bell beats "one," he said—it beateth two.
The night is hideous; but the night to him
I fear is not; and yet I cannot bear
This dire suspense, but to the castle walls—
[*Pauses.*
A footstep! O, how dismally it sounds!
I dread—

Enter the FRENCH GUARD.

Fr. Gu. The Lady Surrey!
L. Sur. O! 'tis he!
But where's my Surrey? Speak. Where is my Lord?
Fr. Gu. Think, madam, think, the proof of faith I've given—
L. Sur. But, my chief thought—what? first; all, all of him.
Fr. Gu. Earl Surrey, dame—
L. Sur. On, on; this cruel pause—
I have a wild and wandering fancy—on.
Fr. Gu. He made me first descend the rope— [*Hesitating.*
L. Sur. And he,
He never will descend. I see thy look,
I read it there, all, all the dismal tale.
Fr. Gu. A moment, hear!
L. Sur. On. Soften not the truth,
For I can bear it all, familiar grown
With horrors. Thou hast seen me somewhat moved,
And once I trembled, but to hear of chains;
'Twas folly all; for we must hear—of death.
Then say, how he—
Fr. Gu. In safety reached the outer wall,
When the night-watch perceived our armour blaze,
Gave the alarm—and ere he could descend,
Thy husband was arrested; though the clash
Of swords convinced me that he fought—
L. Sur. Ha! what?
Left him arrested in the act of flight,
And madly struggling with a host of foes?
Ah! ha! there's treachery, treachery, man, I say.
Thou had'st not, coward, left him to their swords,
Wert thou not leagued against the wretched pair.

The slave that once hath been bought o'er by gold,
Will make a double bargain, and for gold
Sell back his faith to those from whom 'twas bought.
We are betrayed, on every side betrayed.

Fr. Gu. Unjust return for service above price!
For all my perils! I repel the charge,
And dare before Earl Pembroke prove my faith.

L. Sur. Ah! there all my wandering thoughts must fix!
Good, faithful soldier, true above thy state,
Forget the wildness of a poor mad wretch.

Fr. Gu. Madam, I own the privilege of grief;
Yet do I trust thy husband is alive.

L. Sur. Trust!
Thou can'st not know the feelings of a wife,
Or thou would'st never mock me with such comfort.
Poor, poor Matilda! and is this the end,
This the reward for braving fields of war,
The gloom of prisons, and the storms of heaven,
To hear thy very life's spring now perhaps?—
O! O! I must not lose my thoughts that way;
My brain grows feverish, and my heart grows cold:
Yet not so cold, ye midnight murderers, but
It still can rage, and still may spread its rage,
Till yonder English army catch the flame,
And pour down two-fold vengeance on your heads!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The English camp near London. The PROTECTOR'S *Tent. Flourish.*

Enter the PROTECTOR, WINCHESTER, *and* CHESTER.

Win. Hail, London, hail! thou seat of empire, hail!
By heaven's mercy! but it joys my heart,
Once more to see thy distant towers arise.
O! may they soon receive their ancient lords!
Prot. My hopes are strengthened by our late success,
Good Winchester, my very eyes run o'er,
To think how blest we've left the lands behind.
Dear countrymen! till now I never knew
How much I loved ye. Go, now taste the joys,
Sprung from old freedom and old settled laws;
Go, as old peace and concord reign again,
Till your own lands, their increase now your own;
And 'neath the shade of your accustomed bowers
Pursue the dance, the festive board frequent,
And tribes in union meet to part no more.
Ches. Till now, great Pembroke, I considered war,
Of war productive; but thy loftier soul
Can bend rough Mars to nurse the plant of peace.
Yet still we've work to do at yonder walls.
The French presume to threaten an attack;
Let us anticipate—

Prot. Pause till we hear
The force and number of our friends within.
When for her whelps the tigress prowls the woods,
She softly treads the brakes, and round the prey
Circles slow in many a wily maze,
Till of her aim secure, she pounces down,
And sweeps the unwary victim to her den.
Thus 'gainst the French our wily snares we'll spread,
Till, sure of victory, we may strike at once,
And save, by policy, expense of blood.

Win. Let mercy aim, though justice bid the blow.

Enter EARL WILLIAM.

Will. O father! O my friends! rejoice, rejoice!

Prot. Wherefore, my son, rejoice?

Will. Our fleet—

Prot. Ha! what?

Will. The British navy triumphs still o'er France.

Prot. Speak, speak, my son! have we dispersed her fleet?

Will. I've robbed a panting seaman of his news.
Just as the mighty fleet of France began
To land its troops, our ships poured down amain,
And so annoyed its rear, that for revenge
It stood again to sea to crush our barks,
Which, having gained advantage of the wind,
Bore down upon it, boarded sword in hand,
And, though but half its number, took the whole.

Win. Thus all their army at one blow is crushed!

Prot. These wondrous tidings strike e'en to my soul,
And bid me glorify, where glory's due!
Now then, my gallant brothers, now's the time,
While all our pulses thus with victory beat,
Come, let us catch the frenzy of the hour,
And, 'mid the storm that shakes the heavens above,
Pour one more dreadful on the astonished foe,

Teaching them all, by land as well as sea,
England will ne'er a foreign master brook.
Ches. On, on, and fix again on London's towers
Old England's standard!

Enter LADY SURREY (*wildly*).

L. Sur. Ho! to arms, to arms!
What! sluggish Britons, rest ye here in ease,
When through yon city roars the sound of war,
When foes in swarms come thundering to your camp,
And e'en the heavens are battling o'er your heads?
Wait ye a woman's voice to warn ye forth?
Prot. Matilda, O my child! Whence comest thou thus
Wild and distracted? What hath been thy fate?
Where is thy husband Surrey?
L. Sur. Where's my Surrey?
I know not where he is. I'm almost mad.
Arise, my father, brother mine, arise!
Fly, rush at once upon the savage French,
And as ye fight your country's cause, exclaim,
That Surrey bids the torch of vengeance blaze,
That Surrey can o'ercome captivity.
Fly, by one effort save him while ye can.
Prot. They dare not sacrifice thy Surrey's life.
Our ships have beaten their expected fleet,
Their army's lost. They are almost in our power.
L. Sur. Then Surrey may be saved! My hero saved!
Come, come, my brother, I am all on fire.
Pembroke, should father, mother, both be lost,
And sure the dart that pierces Surrey's breast
Will not be far from mine, should death be ours,
My child—Thou know'st, thou know'st—peace, peace, fond heart.

Earl William, let thy sword from hence be mine;
I'll lead where Surrey, should the day be ours—
Will. Sweetest sister, calm thy troubled bosom!
Here, for the present, in our camp remain,
And trust thy brother to avenge thy wrongs.
L. Sur. Frenzy o'er-rules my reason. Go, go bid
The stormy winds lie hushed upon the hills,
The raging billows smoothen to a calm,
The blazing mountains be convulsed no more;
Bid me to rest in peace, when Surrey—No;
Follow me, brother, I can brave the field!
[*Exit*, WILL. *following.*
Prot. In truth, I know not how to blame the deed;
'Tis wildly thought, but wild are these our times.
Come, Lords, let's meet yon hasty foe half way.
Brave prelate Winchester and Chester bold,
Ride ye through either wing of right and left,
While I exhort the centre of our host.
Tell them, this day, to finish their great work,
To drive the French from this their last retreat,
And let imperial London own her king!
[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Field of Battle. Alarum.

Enter the FRENCH PRINCE, NEVERS, *and* BEAUMONT.

Fr. Pr. My succours all cut off; my fleet destroyed!

Beau. Hear me, my liege. My fears thus verified—

Fr. Pr. What though they are, we cannot fly the field.

Beau. O sir, defection spreads on every side;
The restless Londoners are up in arms,
They've stormed the castles and the prisons round,
And poured at once the captive rabble forth:
E'en now the insurgents press upon our rear.

Fr. Pr. Perdition on the accursed race! Fly, fly,
Nevers, and turn on them thy chosen corps.

[*Exit* NEVERS.

Beau. See, see! our ranks give way! O prince, retire!

Fr. Pr. Ho, there!—fly not, ye cowards. Beaumont, haste,
Drive the right wing upon the foe again.

[*Alarum. Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Another part of the field of battle. English and French troops cross the Stage engaging. Alarum.

Enter SURREY.

Sur. Oppose my passage! Tell the trembling lambs
To stop the indignant lion with their flocks.
Beat down their ranks, brave Londoners.

[EARL WILLIAM *pursues* BEAUMONT *across the Stage*, LADY SURREY *following*.

L. Sur. Victory!

[*Seeing* SURREY, *she flies to him.*

My husband!

Sur. Is it truth? how, wherefore thus,
My blest Matilda, genius of my days?

L. Sur. He lives, he lives!

Sur. My precious, best reward! [*Alarum.*

L. Sur. But, but—O! O! [*She sinks.*

Sur. Look up; indeed, all's well.
Softly, Matilda; Surrey's here himself.
Comfort, my own—there, there—

L. Sur. O! art thou saved
From prisons, murders, and from battle saved?

Sur. Awakened to a sense of all their wrongs,
Uprose at once upon their foreign lords
The gallant Londoners; their forces crushed,
Threw open all our prison-gates again,
And called me forth exulting to the field,
Thus to partake the glories of this day,
And thus to win my all in winning thee.

L. Sur. Yet, yet, a thousand fears distract my mind.
This uproar all abroad—

Sur. O! let us hence.
We soon can gain the English camp. [*Flourish.*
Joy! joy!
Behold, the royal standard streams around!

Prot. (*Without.*) Let mercy flow to all. Spare, spare the foe;
And Briton, Briton meet in bands of love.

L. Sur. 'Tis he!

Enter the PROTECTOR, *attended.*

My father and my husband, both,
Both at my breast! This agony's too keen.
Prot. My child, my child! My long lost, glorious son!
I thank thee, heaven! It is now complete.
My heart springs upward with unusual warmth,
And age seems running half-way back to youth.
Sur. My generous sire, be all forgotten thus.
Prot. Come on, my second hero—Surrey, come.
Sur. For England ever!
L. Sur. Surrey, what! again?
Yet, go. Thou art thy country's, and not mine.
Sur. Peerless Matilda; but a little while,
And then—
Prot. To victory—London is our own,
Where we shall meet our countrymen in peace;
For England's charter Henry shall renew:
And may the troubles that its breach hath caused,
Endear that sacred bulwark of our rights,
To future subjects as to future kings!
[*Shouts, and flourish of trumpets.*
Prot. The tyrant yields! my country's free at last!

Flourish. Enter the FRENCH PRINCE *with his train, conducted by* EARL WILLIAM *and the English Lords.*

Will. My Lord Protector, the French Prince submits,
Acknowledging young Henry England's king.
Fr. Pr. Abandoned thus by all our followers,
We bend perforce beneath the fate of war;
Yet do we trust Earl Pembroke's clemency
Will grant all parties honourable terms,
And let us quit this proud and untamed isle,

To seek in safety our paternal realms.

Prot. Go, prince of France; for those who truly free
Will ne'er be conquered, can as conquerors spare.
Go then in safety to your own domains,
And tell your countrymen these solemn truths,
That English treachery sacrificed our rights,
But English virtue won them back by force;
Tell them, by your example greatly warned,
Ne'er to assail our sacred isle again,
But know that independence, through all times,
Alike will baffle foreign force or fraud,
And here, in peerless state, for ever reign!

[*The* PROT. *comes forward.*

O native land! from hence for ever rest
In freedom, union, thus supremely blest!
And should thy genius, Britain, know a time,
When civil Discord flies from clime to clime;
When with the shock each neighb'ring empire groans,
And Ruin, menacing an hundred thrones,
Shakes Europe's centre with his giant form—
Calm and collected shalt thou face the storm;
Within thy sea-girt rock securely shrined,
Shalt stand the guardian of oppressed mankind.
Blest in a prince, whose virtue shall deserve,
Whose spirit his important trust preserve,
Shall still thy splendour, in those darksome days,
Break on the world with undiminished blaze,
Survive the fall of each surrounding state,
Nor cease till all creation yield to fate!

[*The trumpets sound, and the troops shout.*

END OF VOLUME EIGHTH.

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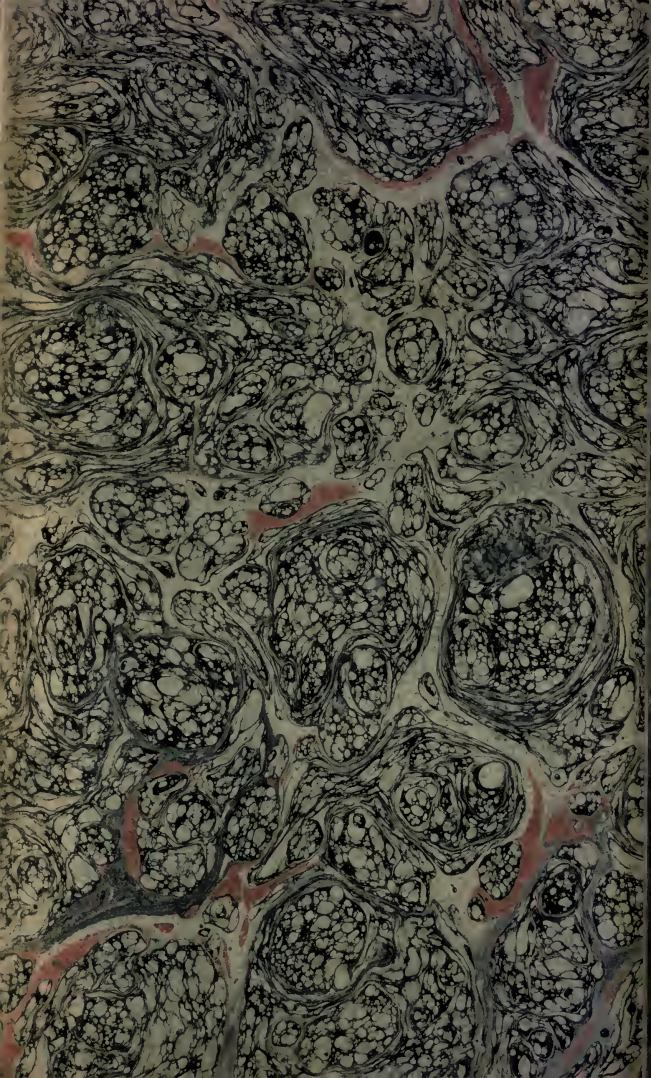

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